ELIZABETH McCAUGHEY: WHITE HOUSE LIES

FEBRUARY 28, 1994 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE ABDICATION

When blood is spilled, it is the responsibility of those who spill it, and the responsibility of those who could have stopped its spilling. For this reason, the carnage in the market of Sarajevo shamed also the White House, which should have been shamed long ago. Bill Clinton's dilatory, casuistic response to the great crime in the Balkans was not only shameful, it also marked a moment in the history of American foreign policy. This administration is transforming the only superpower in the world into the only abdicating superpower in the world. Poor Bosnia, it should have found itself in a trade war. Trade wars we fight. Wars of genocide we watch. (THE EDITORS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7).

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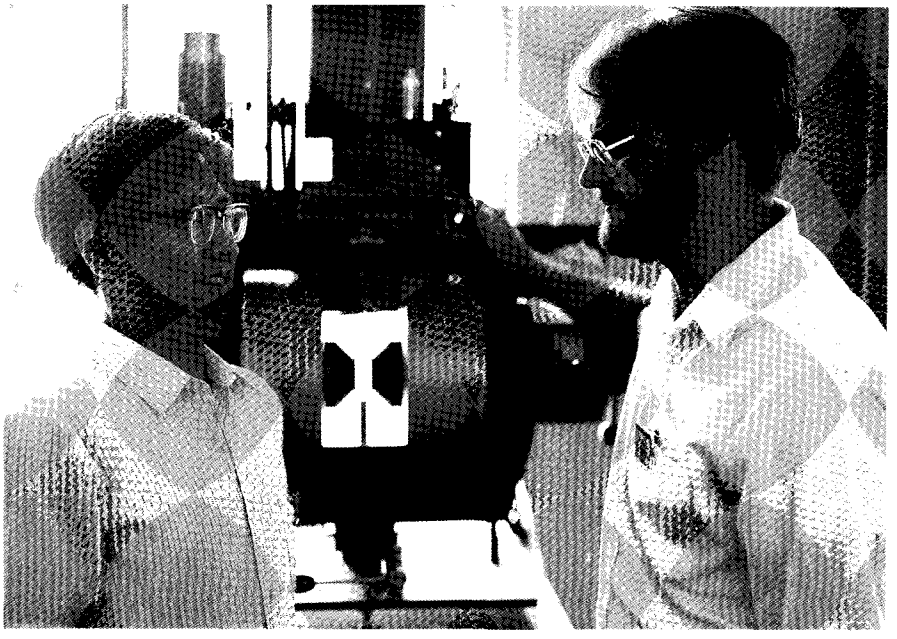
Making Science Together



HIVIPS aims to promote cooperation and scientific development by bringing together scientists from different backgrounds and countries.

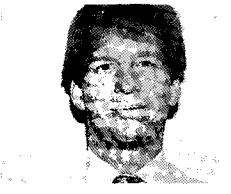
Providing Joint Research Opportunities in Japan

As an electronics engineer, Dr. Gregory Uvieghara has long been intrigued by Japan's success in his chosen field. Small wonder that when the opportunity arose, he jumped at a chance to work as a guest researcher at Hitachi's Central Research Laboratory (CRL) near Tokyo. "The invitation opened the door of a major Japanese laboratory to me. It gave me a unique chance to observe Japanese research methods first-hand," the AT&T Bell Labs researcher says. He spent over a year in Japan studying a new type of semiconductor device.

Opening doors is what the Hitachi Research Visit Programs (HIVIPS) are all about. The programs bring scientists from all over the world together to work on key problems in basic and applied research; allowing creative collaboration that would not be possible otherwise. More than 200 scientists from all over the world have participated in the programs since their inception in 1985.

For Felicia Heiler, HIVIPS allowed her to work side-by-side with Japan's leading expert in submicron semiconductor device physics, whom she had met while studying for her master's degree in electrical engineering at Santa Clara University. The collaboration turned out to be very fruitful. "I ended up with a master's thesis and two publications," Heiler says. She now works as a device engineer for Advanced Micro Devices.

For Dr. Thomas Hildebrandt, HIVIPS gave him a chance to work closely with Japanese experts in handwritten character recognition systems."The sharing of ideas and the facilities certainly were conducive to my research," the Lehigh University computer science professor says. "I made a lot more progress than I would have otherwise."



Dr. Thomas Hildebrandt participated in HIVIPS in 1993.

For many participants, lasting friendships may be HIVIPS' most important benefit. "Many of my best friends are people I met at CRL," Heiler says. "In fact, one of them, my Hitachi advisor, came all the way from Japan to attend my wedding."

We at Hitachi are proud to sponsor HIVIPS. We believe that this scientific exchange not only provides research rewards, but also promotes mutual understanding in the scientific community.

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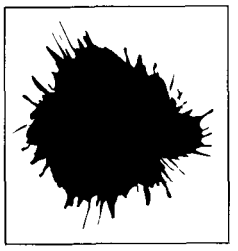

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CORRESPONDENCE

Is/ought

To the editors:

Steven Pinker's article "Grammar Puss" (January 31) obeys a formula that has become standard for people on the "scientific" side in the dreary debate over usage: (1) the schoolmarms say that there are "right" and "wrong" ways of using language (they are *prescriptive*), but (2) we scientists know that "language" is anything that can be systematically used by a group to communicate (we are *descriptive*), so (3) a pox on all schoolmarms.

Let me add something that seldom gets said: this just translates into linguistic terms the is/ought distinction that, in ethical theory, goes back to Hume. A "scientifically complete" description of an adult stabbing an infant to death (one giving the mass and velocity of the knife, say, and the resistance factor for the tissue being stabbed) won't tell you why such an act is considered *wrong*. You can't, in other words, derive "ought" from "is." Arguments like Pinker's simply translate this to the (admittedly more innocent) sphere of language use.

But this is vacuous. The social use of language is highly normative, and various registers and usages in the expressive field are "signs" as loaded with meaning as, say, the tattoos on the huge hairy arm of the Hell's Angel who just hulked into the railway station and sat down beside you. It is true that descriptive linguistics ignores this dimension of language to get its "scientific" results, but it is either dumb or disingenuous to then claim that that dimension doesn't exist. (Compare: a physicist who in journal articles describes the world as a colorless dance of subatomic particles and then starts writing articles in the popular press to prove that color "doesn't exist.")

As someone who has taught in two university departments with colleagues given to saying things like "between you and I" and "for Sally and he," I'm here to tell you that the normative shiver that goes down one's spine at such moments is not about to go away, or be explained away in the name of "scientific description" by people like Pinker. A purely descriptive account of John's scratching his arm may be scientifically indistinguishable from one of John's picking his nose, but your mother, who taught you to know better, and who therefore knew something about life in human societies, understands the difference.

WILLIAM C. DOWLING
New Brunswick, New Jersey

To the editors:

I agree with Steven Pinker's view that formal and Standard American English is overloaded with a number of useless and even inhibitory conventions. Even Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English* makes light of the misplaced modifier as early as the fourth edition of 1965. And every school student knows that competent teachers don't give a damn about ending a sentence on a preposition or beginning one with a "but" or an "and," as long as organization, syntax and diction are effective, and the writer shows good control of the basic conventions of Standard American English. But teachers do their students ill service, indeed, if they do not alert them to the demands of the social, business and political world. Pinker may snicker at the "dangling participle," but as a teacher doing research in writing problems in the business world, I came across article after article of businessmen lamenting that their employees' inability to use Standard American English effectively cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Among the culprits of substandard language was the dangling participle, for such a construction can often lead to misunderstanding, confusion and hilarity (e.g., Groucho Marx's famous elephant in the pajamas). Furthermore, the syntactical structures of Standard English provide a far greater flexibility of expression than any dialect.

It seems to me that the purpose of English language education is not to force people to speak and write in one prescriptive way but to enable them to move easily and confidently from one mode to another depending on purpose, occasion and audience. Even Mark Twain, probably our most skillful handler of dialect, in his essay "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses," gives as Rule 17 of literary art: "Use good grammar." Twain is not referring to the "grammar" of argot, patois or Chomsky's "universal grammar." He was referring to writing for an educated public.

NORMAN RUDNICK
Oakland, California

To the editors:

May Pinker be perennially taunted in his sleep for demonstrating no less than three times his acute sensitivity to the integrity of African American language, while letting slip another fallen woman into casual examplehood. Yo, Mister Up-To-the-Minute-Usage-Man, women aren't fallen unless they are old and can't get up (kinda like some antiquated metaphors). Call me just another '70s, bra-burning, hairy-legged, x-er throwback, but the phrase "fallen woman" does not belong to any language that anyone I know still speaks, with the exception of the pope and maybe Phyllis Schlafly.

LIZZIE ZUCKER SALTZ
Williamsburg, Virginia

To the editors:

Steven Pinker analyzes William Safire's language columns for about two pages of a six-page article. He prefaces his criticisms by calling Safire "the closest thing we have to an enlightened language pundit," and yet the article is titled "Grammar Puss" (by TNR, I assume), two photos of Safire's face are distorted into moronic expressions and the cover "defines" Safire as a pompous bore.

I guess someone figured an article about grammar wasn't enough to really get readers salivating; the red meat of Safire's head had to be thrown on the skewer, tantalizing readers with the prospect of a good roasting, done in the proper analytical fashion, of course, because these are TNR readers here, not "Hard Copy" viewers. I hate being drawn into a story like that, I don't like journalists delighting in snubs and I detest articles that cry wolf.

CAROL SCOTT
San Diego, California

To the editors:

Steven Pinker's remarkable defense of split infinitives, misplaced adverbs, double negatives, the misuse of nouns as verbs and the confusion of nominative and accusative is made brilliant and cogent by his own avoidance of such barbarisms. Does this tell us something?

LAWRENCE K. PETTIT
Indiana, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Re: Steven Pinker.

He's right good. Hopefully, him write on.—Tonto

JOHN W. HELLERSTEDT, M.D.
Austin, Texas

Opening the door

To the editors:

Jeffrey Sachs ("Betrayal," January 31) avoids a critical issue. The hallmark of successful policy-making, be it in Washington or in Moscow, consists in devising feasible agendas. The shock therapy was tried but failed because, in selling it to the Gaidar government at the start of 1992, Sachs ignored this cardinal rule of policy-making.

Shock therapy was a policy package consisting of price decontrol, an immediate and sharp budget deficit reduction, strict monetary discipline and a convertible ruble, all backed by substan-

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tial foreign aid to soften the blow of resulting unemployment. The swift speed of these reforms was also expected to stifle political opposition, even helping to destroy it.

The targeted deficit reduction, set at reducing it to zero in the first quarter of 1992 from a level of about 20 percent in 1991, was overambitious. It should come as no surprise that the announced shock therapy-dictated cuts in spending were subsequently rejected, bringing the deficit back to high levels and returning the economy to high inflation by the end of 1992.

A gradualist prescription, available in January 1992, instead would have set the deficit reduction at steadily rising and credible levels. Since hyperinflation was absent at the time, this alternative could have arguably worked by being politically feasible and economically sensible. Since Sachs likes analogies, may I remind him that if you try to kick a door open, it can shut on the rebound, whereas opening it gradually you will succeed?

The assumption of massive aid inflow to cushion the substantial unemployment and decline in living standards resulting from the sharp deficit reduction was, from the beginning, surrealistic. Massive aid sums of $30 billion per year for five years were floated by Sachs in "Grand Bargain" (*The Washington Post*, May 12, 1991). For him to complain that the Clinton administration is not "ready to put real financial assistance behind Russia's reforms" when, in fact, no one can come up with megabucks is to find scapegoats for one's mistaken assessments.

By selling shock therapy that failed, returning the country to high inflation, polarizing politics and precipitating the postelection predicament, the Gaidar government's advisers have left Russia with a terrible legacy. Shifting the blame to the IMF, the Russian gradualists, Russian conservatives of varying shades, the U.S. Treasury and the Clinton administration cannot relieve them of what will remain their cross to bear.

PADMA DESAI
New York, New York

Closer encounter

To the editors:

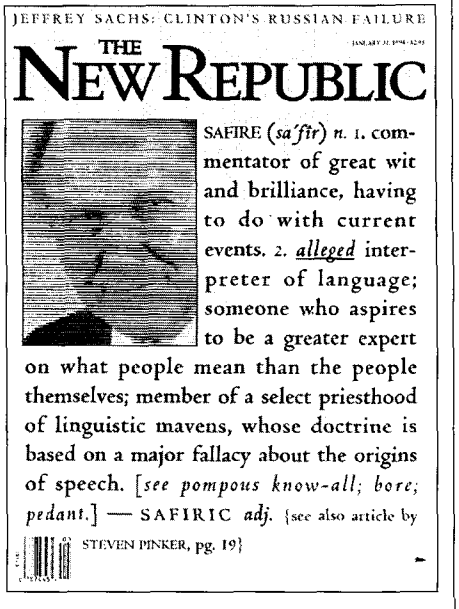
In his Washington Diarist "Close Encounters of the Nazi Kind" (January 24) Leon Wieseltier dismisses the possibility that the film *Schindler's List* could disarm those who deny the Holocaust, arguing that "Spielberg's movie does not 'prove' a thing, since it is *only a movie*" (his emphasis). This would be true if the issue of the Holocaust's occurrence were a rational debate, in which objective evidence was the only ammunition recognized as legitimate by both sides. But as Wieseltier himself so cogently points out, "The discussion about 'Holocaust revisionism' is not a 'debate' between a 'view' that it happened and a 'view' that it did not happen; it is a war between a truth and a disease." As such it is, if anything, more likely to be influenced by the variously emotional, psychological and subliminal impact of movies than by the evidence of the record, to which it will always be able to generate its own fatally easy refutation.

CAROL JOCHNOWITZ
New York, New York

To the editors:

Leon Wieseltier's review of *Schindler's List* lacks a certain sense of irony. In fact, one is tempted to say that Wieseltier is more inclined to find wrong than good. Wieseltier finds it embarrassing that Spielberg has the Jews of Kraków greeting each other in Israeli Hebrew, but he seems oblivious to the fact that Jews and Germans converse in English for the rest of the film. As film criticism goes this is senseless, but as an exercise in pettiness it shows true refinement.

ADAM MINTER
Wayzata, Minnesota


JEFFREY SACHS: CLINTON'S RUSSIAN FAILURE
THE NEW REPUBLIC
SAFIRE (*sa'fir*) *n.* 1. commentator of great wit and brilliance, having to do with current events. 2. *alleged* interpreter of language; someone who aspires to be a greater expert on what people mean than the people themselves; member of a select priesthood of linguistic mavens, whose doctrine is based on a major fallacy about the origins of speech. [*see pompous know-all; bore; pedant.*] — SAFIRIC *adj.* {see also article by STEVEN PINKER, pg. 19}

Free advertising

To the editors:

I wish that somewhere in all the free advertising you've given our magazine of late, you'd show a bit more of your proverbial concern for the truth. In an attempt to rebut our current radio ad that mentions David Brock's latest article, your Notebook item of January 31 claims: "Brock presents no evidence whatsoever that the affairs continued up to the inauguration or that the president broke the law."

On page 27 of our January issue, for example, Brock writes:

> Shortly before the Clintons left Little Rock for Washington, Roger Perry said, one of the troopers (whom I also interviewed) told him that he had arranged for the AP&L employee to arrive at the governor's mansion at 5:15 a.m., dressed in a trench coat and a baseball cap at Clinton's instruction. The trooper told Perry he had told the Secret Service that she was "staff coming in very early." Clinton had arranged for the trooper to bring the woman through a basement door, which opened into a game room, where Clinton was waiting. The trooper said he was instructed to stand at the top of the stairs leading from the basement to the main floor of the residence and to alert Clinton if Hillary woke up, according to Perry.

The incident is corroborated by *The Los Angeles Times* in its own story on the troopers' allegations.

As for possible law-breaking, Brock on page 22 writes:

> During the initial call, according to Perry, Clinton let it be known that he was willing to offer favors in return for the troopers' refusal to cooperate further.... Perry said that Ferguson told him that in the course of the conversations Clinton offered Ferguson a federal job ... explicitly in exchange for his help in thwarting publication of any stories. This could be a violation by Clinton of a criminal statute barring the solicitation of money or anything of value (in this case, information) in consideration for the promise of federal employment.

The White House has denied any offers of jobs for silence, but not whether jobs were offered in return for information.

You seem to have confused evidence with indictment and conviction.

WLADYSLAW PLESZCZYNSKI
Managing Editor
The American Spectator

Tippety-tap

To the editors:

Gordon S. Wood's review, "The Dialectics of Dixie" (January 31), demonstrated his masterful command of early American politics and political thought. Apparently, however, he knows a bit less about the American legal profession. The famous law school John Calhoun attended was run by Tapping Reeve, not "Tappan Reeve."

MICHAEL S. MAYER
Missoula, Montana

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FROM WASHINGTON

Mad social scientists?

The Clinton people have done a terrible job explaining why their health care reform is so complicated and intrusive. Why, for example, must virtually everyone join one of these "alliance" thingies? And what is this business George Will was going on about in *Newsweek* recently? "It would be illegal," Will wrote, "for doctors to accept money directly from patients, and there would be fifteen-year jail terms for people driven to bribery for care they feel they need but the government does not deem 'necessary.' " Sounds scary.

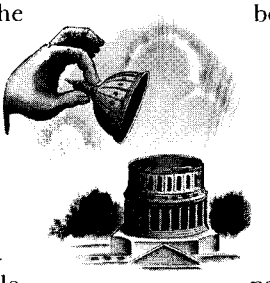
After all, as the skeptics point out, a large majority of Americans currently have health insurance they're satisfied with. Without a clearer explanation than has been supplied so far, it is perfectly reasonable to wonder why this majority's current arrangements must be unsettled. Why isn't it enough simply to reform the insurance market so that people can't lose their coverage, and to create a much smaller program to help the uninsured? Are the Clintons just mad social scientists, experimenting needlessly on the body politic?

The answer is that the complications are inevitable. Perhaps not these exact complications, but either these or others that would arguably be worse.

Take those alliances. Their purpose is twofold: to hold down health care costs through market competition by giving buyers more leverage, and to help end price discrimination against individuals and small businesses by putting them into pools as large as the largest companies. But if the alliances are such a wonderful idea, why must folks be forced into them? Under the Clinton plan, only companies with more than 5,000 employees are exempt. Representative Jim Cooper's plan exempts all companies with more than 100 employees. Most rival plans simply allow companies and other groups to form buying pools if they wish, and leave it at that. Why are Clinton's mandatory?

As explained by Clinton's health care guru Ira Magaziner (and I'm explaining it better than he did), the reason has to do with the problem of risk-sharing. One goal of every health reform plan, including the most conservative and "market-oriented," is to end the insurance industry practice of charging more to people who are more likely to get sick, or are already sick: older people and those with "pre-existing conditions." Magaziner calls this "discrimination," but it's really just rational business practice unless forbidden by the government. The classic purpose of private insurance of all sorts is to insure against unknown risks, not against known ones. Absent government regulation forcing all insurers to do the same, charging bad risks the same as good risks is a recipe for bankruptcy.

But "community rating," as it's called—ordering insurance companies to charge everyone the same for health insurance, no matter what his or her individual risk—is not a simple matter, though you would not know this from some Republicans who present it as a painless cure-all. It requires not just rules against price discrimination, which are fairly simple, but rules to prevent insurance companies from discriminating against customers who are likely to prove expensive, which are much more complex and hard to enforce. Ordered by the government to charge both of them the same, it will be a remarkably saintly insurance company that is not tempted to make a healthy potential customer feel more welcome than a sick one.



And even if insurance companies don't discriminate, the luck of the draw means that some of them will end up with a worse risk pool than others. That is why "community rating" also requires complex procedures for assessing individual risks, and for redistributing funds among insurance companies to level the playing field.

Magaziner maintains that if almost everybody acquires insurance through these large regional alliances of his, the task of equalizing insurance costs becomes much simpler and requires less intrusive regulation, not more. The general point is that larger risk pools equalize costs automatically. If the alliances are strictly voluntary, groups of low-risk (younger, healthier) people will form outside of them and negotiate preferential rates. If there are hundreds of insurance companies making separate arrangements with thousands of companies and millions of individuals, the task of leveling the playing field among customers and companies becomes infinitely more complicated.

Magaziner may be right or wrong that his alliances are the best way to solve this problem. But he is right that there is no "simple" solution, and those who say that minor insurance reforms can straighten everything out are either ignorant or dishonest. The dirty secret of all those from Clinton on right who oppose a Canadian-style single-payer system is that insurance "community rating"—the bottom-line reform nearly everyone advocates—essentially socializes health care costs, and will require tremendous new government involvement no matter how it is done.

As for George Will's fifteen years in jail for bribery, Magaziner says this applies only to outright insurance fraud. If a patient and a doctor collude to bill an insurance company for a procedure that isn't covered, by purposely mislabeling it as one that is covered, they go to the slammer. Fifteen years seems a bit stiff, but of course that's the fashion these days.

It would not be "illegal for doctors to accept money directly from patients." First, anyone would be free to go outside the system and pay any doctor any amount for any service. Second, many insurance plans would involve partial co-payments by patients, as they do now. What would be illegal is for doctors to say, "I'll treat you, but only if you pay me more than the agreed-upon co-payment." This is, first of all, a matter once again of insurance fraud. If doctors have agreed to accept a set fee schedule with a set co-payment, they should stick to it.

More generally, this rule addresses the problem of controlling costs in an industry where insurance covers all or most of the cost of individual services. For years Medicare paid 80 percent of a set doctor's fee, but doctors were free to charge patients more than just the remaining 20 percent. Inevitably, the fact that four-fifths of the basic charge was seemingly "free" enabled doctors to charge a lot more than they otherwise could if Medicare weren't there. This became a huge engine of health cost inflation. Forcing health care providers to negotiate rates and then stick to them is the key to "managed competition."

There are alternatives to managed competition, such as Senator Phil Gramm's scheme to encourage people to go without insurance for all but "catastrophic" medical expenses. But if you want basic medical insurance to survive, and if you want more market discipline on costs in the health care industry, rules like this one are essential.

Next question?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 28, 1994

THE ABDICATION

(continued from the cover)

But it is not even clear to the American government that a war of genocide is what it is watching. In Houston a few days after the Saturday slaughter, Clinton smugly and fatalistically observed that "until those folks get tired of killing each other over there, bad things will continue to happen." It is true that Bosnian forces have recently retaken, and ethnically cleansed, some territory that Croatian forces had taken from them; but these ugly and foolish actions notwithstanding, it is not true that "those folks" are "killing each other." The Serbian (and Croatian) folks are attempting to exterminate the Bosnian folks. The war in the Balkans is not a civil war. It is a war of aggression, and its objective is genocide. So far 200,000 people have been killed in this war of genocide, and 2 million people have been made refugees.

It is important to understand that genocide is not quantitatively measured. The analogy between the European excruciations of the 1940s and the European excruciations of the 1990s, an analogy that was useful to Clinton on the campaign trail, is an apposite one. The standard is not 6 million. Before millions of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and dissidents were murdered, thousands of them were murdered; and before thousands of them were murdered, hundreds of them were murdered; and before hundreds of them were murdered, tens of them were murdered; and it was, the whole time, with every bullet fired and every switch thrown, genocide. Indeed, it is possible to kill a single man or a single woman and still be guilty of genocide, if you kill him or her as the beginning, or the middle, or the end of the extinction of the group to which he or she belongs; if killing is also cleansing. Historically speaking, there is nothing dirtier than cleansing.

But Clinton does not speak about the Balkan war historically. He is, you might say, failing the 1940s test, stumbling his way into history as the president who didn't get it. Consider his terse statement on the day of the slaughter in Sarajevo. Suddenly our prolix president was unable to put our struggle into words. "I am outraged by this deliberate attack on the people of Sarajevo." But this deliberate attack was no different from all the other deliberate attacks, except that the sadists got lucky. "There can be no possible military justification for an attack against a marketplace where women, men and children of the city were pursuing their everyday lives." But there can be no possible military justification for any of the other attacks on the great and wretched city, which occur daily and so far have left 10,000 people dead. Indeed, there can be no possible military justification for the siege of Sarajevo, or the conquest of Bosnia. The president does not seem to grasp that the Saturday slaughter in Sarajevo was, for Sarajevo, a really quotidian catastrophe. It differed in degree, not in kind.

And then there was this grotesque sentence in the president's statement: "The United Nations should urgently investigate this incident and clearly identify those who are guilty." Identify those who are guilty! Maybe Representative Cooper did it. And again, the next day: "I have asked Ambassador Albright to urge the United Nations to accelerate the efforts to try to confirm responsibility for the strike in the market yesterday." Radovan Karadzic, the disloyal son of Sarajevo who is the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, is giggling. It was Karadzic who immediately announced that the Serbs were innocent, and that the Bosnians (or the Muslims, as he likes to call them, erasing Bosnia in language more thoroughly than in land) were killing and maiming themselves. It worked like a charm. In no time at all the air was filled with "crater analysis," which is the method by which the origins of distantly fired shells are identified. Since the mortar shell that turned the market into a charnel house struck the roof of a stall, which interfered with its hellish trajectory, it is impossible, according to the "crater analysts" of the United Nations, to confirm the location of the mortar that fired it. The little bomb fell, in the words of a

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British soldier, "in a range bracket that straddles both sides." The sadists, lucky again.

"When they kill me," the president of Bosnia said the day after the massacre, "they will probably say I committed suicide." With the authority, no doubt, of "bullet-hole analysis." This whole controversy is a Goebbels-like fake. Never mind that not a single "crater analysis" in the history of the siege of Sarajevo has established the guilt of anybody except the Serbians (see "Blaming The Victim," by Tom Gjelten, TNR, December 20, 1993). It plays right into the hands of The Big Lie (which, in the age of CNN, is The Extremely Big Lie) to regard the question of the responsibility for this massacre as a "debate" between the "view" that the Serbians did it and the "view" that the Bosnians did it. But this is how the president of the United States is regarding it, in his spirit of inclusion.

At this writing, the response of the American government to the Saturday slaughter is approximately this: we are threatening an end to threats. This will stand as one of the representative formulations of Clintonism, and this will not ruin any Serbian gunner's day. The signals from the White House are confusing, and they are the measure of a confusion that is deeper than diplomatic. Some "senior officials" tell *The New York Times* that NATO will "give the Bosnian Serbs a week to lift the siege of Sarajevo or face air strikes by allied planes on their artillery positions in the mountains," even as other senior officials warn other reporters not to play the possibility of retaliation too big. The threat of strikes—this time we really mean it!—might temporarily restrain the Serbian onslaught, and it appears already to have resulted in a cease-fire—this time they really mean it!—and a withdrawal of the "siege guns" around Sarajevo; but even air strikes, if limited to the area around Sarajevo and understood as a single response to a single massacre, will not affect the balance of power almost at all; and nothing has been vouchsafed about the prompt lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia. We admire the people of Sarajevo, of course, for their stoicism.

"The ultimate answer to all this killing," the president said, "is for the three parties to reach an agreement that they can live with and honor." This marks a shift in our dodge. In the weeks before the massacre, the administration was, to put it truthfully, in favor of war. The American government was opposed to a peace agreement, and it was angry at the French government for demanding one. A peace agreement, the Americans said, will make the Bosnians themselves complicitous in the conquest of Bosnia. But the administration was itself complicitous in that conquest; and so its skepticism about a settlement was just another bout of bad faith. (In the matter of Bosnia, in the course of two administrations, Washington has been bad faith city.) For a peace settlement will require an international force to police it; and an international force will require the participation of American troops; and the participation of American troops will require a political risk on the part of the president; and there the attraction of peace ended, until last week.

For Bosnia, peace means partition. And partition, too, has its requirements. The president seems willing to meet the requirements of peace, but not the requirements of partition. Unless all the parties to the partition have the power to defend themselves, for example, the partition will not be a peace, it will be a pause in a war. You cannot be for peace and against the arming of Bosnia. It is a measure of the moral seriousness of the Bosnians that they have asked only to fight their own battle. They do not want foreign troops with guns, they want foreign guns without troops. There are reports that the Bosnians are receiving weapons from the Saudis and the Iranians (and from profiteering Serbians, too; an archipelago of honor, is the former Yugoslavia), and this offends the sensibilities of some Westerners. The Bosnians are to be forgiven, however, if their survival is more vivid to them than our sensibilities. In any case, the United States can provide for their survival and our sensibilities by lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia. "Lift" used to be considered a step toward war. The time has come to consider "lift" more properly as a step toward peace.

And partition has another requirement, which is a demonstration of the West's deadly earnestness about it. By deadly, we mean deadly. There is no reason to believe that Slobodan Milosevic, the tacky, tribe-intoxicated thug who rules Serbia, will be dissuaded from his grisly advance by anything other than an experience of force. Air strikes, and only air strikes, will make the point. Unless the Serbian positions around Sarajevo are struck, and the United States makes it clear to the butcher in Belgrade that he must lift the siege of Sarajevo or have a taste of Sarajevo himself, we may expect the "strangulation" of Sarajevo to continue, and the metaphysical speculation in Western capitals about the meaning of "strangulation" to continue, until Sarajevo falls.

There have been a number of objections to air strikes, and to military action more generally. First, there is the objection that it is a difficult business. We do not doubt it; but we note that this administration is picky about difficulty. We do not see the president daunted by the complexity of deficit reduction or regional health alliances. Indeed, he basks in the complexity. And we understand why: complexity has a way of being diluted by urgency. Second, there is the objection that military action is, as Billie Holiday used to warn, all or nothing at all. Air strikes, it is said, will inexorably lead to the introduction of ground troops. This is silly. The projection of military power, unless it is hobbled in its conception by the utopia of Desert Storm or the dystopia of Vietnam, should be guided by the principle of calibration. Where there is intelligence, there are no slippery slopes. We have at our disposal a variety of instruments of force that may be matched to a variety of objectives of strategy. It is demagoguery to assert that we cannot make the cost of

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the siege of Sarajevo unacceptable to Serbia except at a cost unacceptable to us.

Third, there is the objection that it may not work. It may not. But the skeptics will have to do better than isolationism or Murphy's Law. After all, there is empirical evidence to the contrary. A little pin-striped noise was all it took to push Serbian guns out of their diabolical "range bracket." We know that Milosevic is not a brave man. He has already caviled at the prospect of American resistance, until the president dispelled the prospect. And Belgrade is not Baghdad; there is an opposition to its jingoist ruler, and a desire not to become the pariah of the post-communist West. And the Serbian military is only the Serbian military. And the Serbians have something to lose, which is their foully gotten gain in Bosnia. There is something comic about all the talking heads on television who sagely advise that the instability in the Balkans is the shape of things to come and then demand guarantees. There are no guarantees; but from this rudimentary fact about human affairs, evil should not be allowed to draw encouragement.

This is not all. The United States will not act against the genocide in Bosnia unless it acts autonomously. It is one of Clinton's contributions to American foreign policy, however, to have stripped it of its autonomy. The difference between multilateralism Bush-style and multilateralism Clinton-style has not been sufficiently observed. For Bush, it was necessary for the United States to act in concert with other nations, in the setting of the United Nations, but as first among equals. For Clinton, it is necessary for the United States to act in concert with other nations, in the setting of the United Nations, but as one among equals. There is Rwanda, there is Malaysia, there is America. Thus we had action against Iraq and we have inaction against Serbia. When in Brussels a few weeks ago he was asked, he thought rudely, about NATO assistance to Sarajevo, the president said that "we have done everything the United Nations has asked us to do." This was an abdication. And so it was a little delicious when Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has not exactly covered himself in Balkan glory, informed NATO in the wake of the Saturday slaughter that the decision to strike was theirs to make.

But the administration did not find an opportunity in the secretary-general's change of heart, since it was not looking for an opportunity. Boutros-Ghali robbed American policy of its United Nations cover and delivered it to its European cover. It is commonly said that Bosnia is a European problem, and that the Europeans should do something about it. It is, and they won't. Atlanticism, too, is just an alibi. Last week Lawrence Eagleburger, who aided and abetted the Serbian aggression, opined ruefully on television that "there has to be a time when the Europeans no longer hide behind our skirts." But this is backwards: we are hiding behind the Europeans' skirts. Clinton has abjured America's primacy in NATO just as surely as he has abjured America's primacy at the United Nations. In doing so, he has displayed a terrible misunderstanding of the alliance and its history. And so it was a little delicious when the foreign ministers of France, Holland and Belgium surprised the White House by calling for the use of force to end the siege of Sarajevo.

The digusting events in southern Europe are a challenge to American interests and American values. Anarchy is an affront to our interests and genocide is an affront to our values. And the American interests that are implicated by the Serbian war are not only regional, they are also global. The audience for Bill Clinton's prevarications includes Kim Il Sung and Saddam Hussein and Raoul Cedras and Mohamed Farah Aideed and a host of petty fascists in fledgling states who have been wondering about their freedom of action. And what he is telling them all is: act freely, we are busy with ourselves. Clinton does not see that he is making a more recalcitrant world.

The torture of Sarajevo also puts a special pressure on America. For there is a profound sense in which the Sarajevan experiment resembles the American experiment. Sarajevo is a tolerant, secular, multiethnic, multicultural city. For Bosnians, Croatians and Serbians, for Muslims, Christians and Jews, the city of Sarajevo was an oasis of decency, a rare and beautiful place where the traditions collided peacefully. There was a time, in the days before his presidency, when Clinton appeared to apprehend the relevance of the Bosnian fate: "Lord of Mercy," he told reporters, "there's 150 different racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles County.... I know that ethnic divisions are one of the strongest impulses in all of society all over the world, but we've got to take a stand against it." The punishment of Sarajevo is the punishment of an American ideal. For Americans in particular, it should be painful to behold.

But this pain is one pain the president fails to feel. Instead the White House shows indifference, and divagation, and timidity, and a sudden anxiety that the terrible pictures on television are becoming a political embarrassment. To be sure, there is outrage. "I know I speak for all Americans," the president said on the day of the massacre in the market, "in expressing our revulsion and anger at this cowardly act." But there is something a little cozy about this outrage. Indeed, we must be careful, when we come to consider the destruction of Bosnia, not to express what we warmly call outrage, if outrage is an expression of surprise. The moral sense can no longer survive if it is surprisable. The will to resist evil must be as grim and as disabused and as perdurable as the will to commit evil. Sarajevo is not an occasion for sentiment. It is an occasion for action. But we have a president who prefers feeling deeply to acting strongly. He is not a bad man. He merely makes goodness look like weakness. Historians will deal harshly with him for the horrors that he has already countenanced. If only he feared historians as much as he fears pollsters. •

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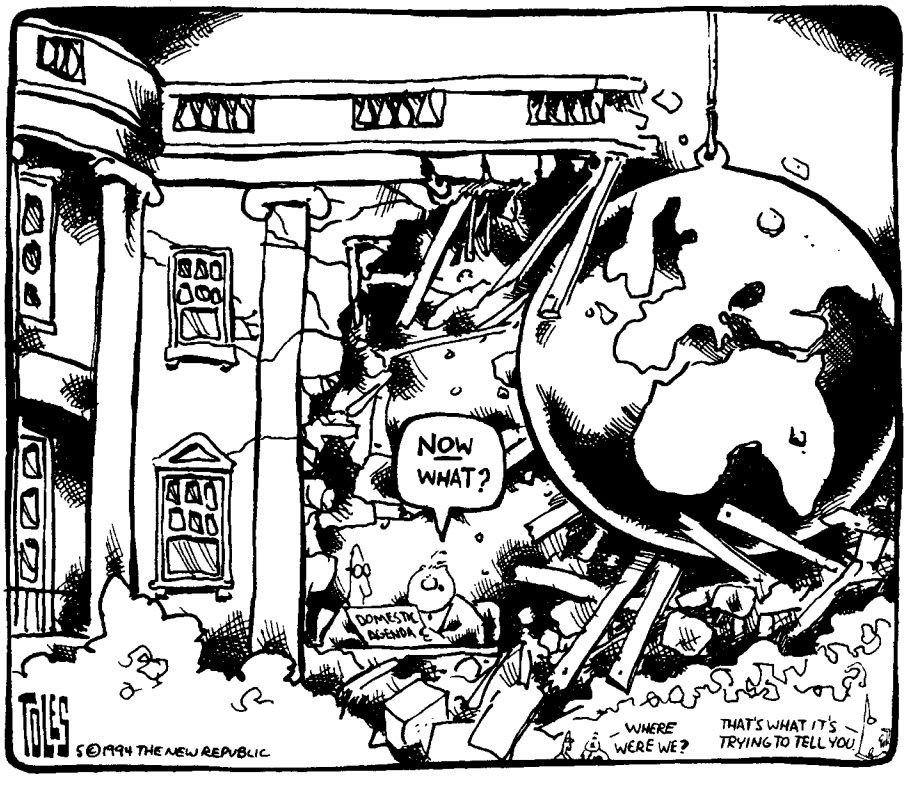
NOTEBOOK

WAITING FOR IRA: After reading Elizabeth McCaughey's response to the White House's response to her recent TNR article, readers will no doubt make up their own minds about who's been telling the truth. For our part, we were initially surprised by the White House's characterization of the article as "a blatant lie." In retrospect, it seems merely a classic case of what psychiatrists call "projection." We're still waiting for a response from Mr. Magaziner to our invitation for a debate.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD: For those debating whether Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan had sufficiently renounced his aide Khalid Abdul Muhammed, the real answer came two days after Farrakhan's February 3 press conference. On Saturday night, at Baltimore City Community College, in an auditorium packed with more than 400 supporters, Muhammed himself spoke the truth. "To the news media," he boomed, pointing to the press pit, "there are those among our enemies and oppressors who want to see a split. Well, Louis Farrakhan is my spiritual father. He's my leader, my teacher and my God. There is no division here." Muhammed continued: "I didn't come here to teach black people to hate white people. I know I can't just say some words to make you hate white folk, if all that white folk have done to you hasn't made you hate white folk already." He directed many comments at the press: "My subject won't touch this stuff you guys came for," he whined, in what he thought was a white accent, with the emphasis on "guys." Outside the auditorium, devotees were hawking copies of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews," for only $6. For the same price, you could buy a tape of the Kean College speech, which was crackling endlessly from a tape recorder, like a vile echo of the laughter inside.



THE GAY RIGHT: *The American Spectator's* David Brock, whose career has been built on "outing" heterosexuals' private lives, last month told *The Washington Post* something about his own: he's gay. Brock lashed out at Frank Rich of *The New York Times* for a column that described Brock's reporting as laced with misogyny. Brock called the column (which made no reference to homosexuality) a "thinly veiled outing," and insisted that his sexual life was no one's business. We agree with him on that point. But the most interesting element of this twist in the tale is that Brock's newfound honesty has put another nail in the coffin of the respectable right's double standard with regard to homosexuality. It's now true that the bastion of aggressive conservatism, *The American Spectator,* has an openly gay man as its star reporter. We wonder what the *Spectator*'s readers think about that. Once upon a time, the magazine referred to homosexuals as people with heads shaped like "butternut squash" (this an alleged satire). It has also run gay-baiting material from, among others, Tom Bethell and P.J. O'Rourke. Now it's a path-breaking publication, whose two most recent blockbusters were written by an openly gay man. Asked if the magazine would publish anti-gay material in the future, R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., the magazine's editor, says, "It goes without saying that someone's sexual orientation is their own business. We never gave a damn about [Brock's] orientation, or yours, or that Polish guy on the staff [managing editor Wladyslaw Pleszczynski]. At *The American Spectator* we'd be just as happy all to be considered homosexuals, except for the Polish guy." As for the "Polish guy," Pleszczynski agrees with Tyrrell: tolerance reigns at *The American Spectator.*

MEETINGS WE'D LIKE TO MISS: On December 5 we invited readers to submit their entries. Competition was fierce. Honorable mention goes to James A.

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Bosakowski of Cambridge, Maryland, who called our attention to the Delmarva Meat Goat Conference in Salisbury, Maryland ("Topics include pasture management, hay quality and reproductive management.... The registration fee includes goat barbecue"). Credit too to William Poling of Silver Spring, Maryland, who passed on information about a meeting of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations: "the purpose of the meeting is to discuss topics and questions which may be recommended for inclusion on future Joint Board examinations in actuarial mathematics and methodology." Second prize goes to Bill Swayze of Dover, New Jersey, who flushed out former Mayor David N. Dinkins's "Toilet Rebate Convention" ("9 a.m: Coffee. 10 a.m: Mayor's Remarks. 11 a.m: Briefing.") First prize—a year's subscription to TNR—goes to David Kaye of Berkeley, California. The year's most boring meeting appears to have taken place in Berkeley on November 14, 1993:

> A Mensch Among Men: Jewish men rarely have the opportunity to come together and speak openly and honestly with other Jewish men. Join us for an afternoon of discussion and interactive exercises in which we will explore the many joys and challenges of being a Jewish man. All Jewish men are welcome.

We are counting on our readers to admire the spirit of self-criticism in which this decision has been made.

SO MANY BIGOTS, SO LITTLE TIME: You might conceivably expect stronger condemnation of lines such as "We kill the faggot, we kill the lesbian, we kill them all" from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation than from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. But while the latter group saw fit to denounce the virulently homophobic parts of Khalid Abdul Muhammed's speech, the former couldn't even muster a press release. "There are lots of people who are homophobic, and it's a question of where you put your resources," says GLAAD spokesman Donald Suggs. "I read the text of what he said, and it wasn't really all that important." Suggs says that GLAAD's silence about public threats to murder homosexuals was in no way related to the need to stay politically correct in the matter of race.

MISTAKES ARE MADE:

Reagan, Bush cleared in Iran-contra

—*Detroit Free Press*, January 19, 1994

IRAN-CONTRA SCANDAL:

Iran-Contra report fingers Reagan

—*Lansing State Journal*, same day

(Thanks to Donald J. Montgomery, Okemos, Michigan.) •

THE PRESS

LIGHTS! CAMERA! NEWS!

By Michael Lewis

Every now and again some trivial incident highlights the benefits of working for a small low-paying journal of opinion rather than a giant well-paying news organization. Last week's lynching at *The Los Angeles Times* of a photographer named Mike Meadows was such a clarifying event. Meadows, who had worked at the *Times* since 1961, was convicted of staging a photograph during the big fire last autumn in Southern California. The picture captured a weary-looking fireman splashing himself with water from a large swimming pool, against a background of a presumably fancy house all but consumed by flames. Sadly, it was too good to be news. As the photo editor of *The Los Angeles Times* told Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post*, Meadows did not simply record the scene, he actually suggested to the fireman that he kneel beside the pool and splash water over his head. His essential fraudulence exposed, Meadows was suspended without pay, booted from editorial into administration, withdrawn from various photography competitions and publicly humiliated. And he was lucky! "This is a firing offense," his editor told the *Post*. "When you manipulate the situation, you manipulate the news." The manipulator was treated with "compassion" only because he had risked his life for others during the 1992 riots. He was a "good person."

The case has several recent precedents, which together form something of a pattern. Photographs of child prostitutes in Moscow published by *Time* turned out to be the invention of a 17-year-old Russian photographer who was simply giving the American journalists what they wanted. A picture of Los Angeles gang members posing menacingly with weapons, accompanying a fear-mongering article in *USA Today*, was staged as the gang members voluntarily handed the weapons over to a guns-for-jobs program. And, of course, various television magazine shows have staged everything from truck explosions to marine holocausts. In each case the culpable news organization denies the initial charge. When the cover-up fails, the perpetrators of the original fiction are wheeled out and punished. Careers end, sometimes with a bang, more often with a whimper. But never is the offending story or photograph evaluated for its truth content; and the one defense no respectable American journalist ever makes is, "Okay, I embellished a bit. It's still more or less true, so who cares?" By common, tacit agreement all fictions are equally bad.

But they aren't. The Meadows photo is especially

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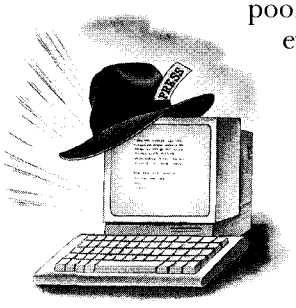
interesting because its fiction is clearly so harmless. (It would be one thing if he'd set fire to the house; still another if he had dressed up a friend in a fireman's suit.) The image is perfectly true to the event in most of what it conveys, to wit: (*a*) that fighting fires makes you hot, (*b*) that the houses of people rich enough to own swimming pools also burn to the ground, (*c*) that even firemen realize that it's pointless to fight a house fire when there's nothing left of the house and (*d*) that there is a certain irony in running out of water pressure—as the firemen had—when you are standing beside a giant swimming pool. Its sole distortion—that this particular fireman was so hot that he was moved to cool himself off with swimming pool water—would seem to be of little consequence in comparison.



And yet the photograph provoked the same level of outrage as if it had perpetrated an evil lie. Obviously something is at work at *The Los Angeles Times* other than the simple love of the truth. But of course there is! The photograph challenges a crucial news-gathering conceit: that respectable journalism is a passive exercise in fact-gathering that conveys to the reader an unadulterated slice of reality.

This piece of propaganda is a far greater threat to the truth than anything in the photograph. It is also crucial to the selling of the news, especially in America; just how crucial can be deduced from the tendency of news-gathering factories to panic, to overreact and even to lie when they are caught violating their own truth-telling rules. Their inability to distinguish between harmless and meaningful distortions arises because the rules themselves—in addition to being a guard against abuse—are a form of propaganda. How on earth can a newspaper be read as anything but a complex interpretation of events? Forget that much of what one reads in the paper has been written because some interested person wanted it to be, and so persuaded a journalist to do his bidding. Forget that many of the most successful journalists spend much of their time getting people to say things they normally would not. Forget that all pictures and words should be regarded, to some extent, as an act of creation. Journalism, even at its most mundane, alters its subjects every time the journalist follows the rules of respectable journalism and announces his or her presence. Who knows if the fireman might not have been inclined to cool his brow if the photographer from *The Los Angeles Times* had *not* been looming beside him with a camera?

Truth-telling rules were designed not for minds that love the truth but for minds that fear having to decide what is true and what is not. As a journalist you can distort reality egregiously in all the usual ways: taking quotes out of context, making jokes read seriously, putting your own weak arguments into other people's mouths or simply ignoring the phoniness your presence forever inspires in your subjects. But ask a fireman standing near a swimming pool to splash a bit of water on his face, and you're fired. •

MOSCOW POSTCARD

ART OF THE ZDYELKA

By Bill Gifford

In an ad that runs on Russian T.V. almost every night, a gentle-looking *babushka* sorts through the family treasure chest as her granddaughter looks on. "These are the things we most cherish," the older woman says, taking from the box a silver spoon, grandfather's army medals and, last but not least, a voucher representing Grandma's share of Russia's industrial carcass.

The handsome certificate is the cornerstone of Boris Yeltsin's privatization program. "We need millions of property owners," he proclaimed in October 1992, when the state issued one to every Russian man, woman and child. Grandma's certificate entitles her to a share of the state-owned enterprise of her choice. She could also invest it in a mutual fund, some of which promise returns as high as 800 percent, or sell it for cash, perhaps to one of the grim-faced men who stand outside Metro stations with signs that say, "I BUY VOUCHERS."

Few vouchers stay in the box. But rather than paving the way to privatization, they have stoked Moscow's hyper-speculative economy, where anything that can be bought and sold for a profit, is. Grandma's chit is less likely to end up in a privatizing company, as the ad recommends, than someplace like the Central Russian Universal Stock Exchange, a bustling voucher bazaar, where one day I met a pleasant young trader whom I'll call Oleg.

Oleg was not groomed for life in the capitalist jungle: he studied engineering at a Moscow university, and would certainly have followed his father and uncle into the Party. But the aristocratic 22-year-old has taken to his new life rather well. Decked out in a Russian suit, a French tie and cowboy boots, he carries his smart briefcase past the Lenin plaque and dour security guards at the entrance to the trading floor, which was once the auditorium of a commercial college. One doesn't notice, at first, that his overcoat is missing a button or two. Not to worry: if his wagers pay off, he'll be able to buy himself a closetful of new coats.

Oleg and his dozen partners, the oldest of whom is 26, are casino capitalists, speculating in vouchers and dollars. They place their bets with borrowed money, sharpening the odds with the help of computers. Their *Pravda* is the slick business weekly *Kommersant*, which packs more graphs and analysis into a single sixty-page issue—covering everything from Siberian natural gas to the street price of a pack of Salems—than

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Fortune and *Forbes* combined.

Baby-faced Oleg stands out in this auditorium jammed with tough-looking men. Though the air is viscous with sweat and nicotine, everyone wears an overcoat. Money is everywhere: calloused fingers clutch wads of $100 bills. Bales of vouchers are stacked on tables by the walls. A scoreboard shows today's price: 22,400 rubles, more than double the certificate's face value but down 15 percent since the resignation yesterday of reformer Yegor Gaidar. It's still a good price, when vouchers can be bought from rural people for as little as 200 rubles.

As trading starts, the crowd presses forward, jockeying for position in front of an auctioneer who rattles off numbers, waving his hands like a mad chorus director. The traders respond with stanzas of yelling. Hands shoot up, the gavel slams down and buyers pair off with sellers. I'm watching one man swap a bundle of $100 bills for an even bigger one of vouchers when he looks up suddenly. He stares back at me for an uncomfortably long time.

Relatively few of the 100,000 vouchers changing hands in this exchange today will actually be invested, at least not as long as there are quick profits to be made. About a third of the 150 million vouchers are simply traded back and forth between speculators. Interest rates of 25 percent per month tend to discourage long-term thinking, as does the perilous course of reform. And it's not always easy, or attractive, to invest in privatization. When I called the Red October Chocolate Factory, where Lloyd Bentsen had bought twenty dollars' worth of stock during the president's visit, I was told the company does not sell shares to the public. That's just as well, since Red October is crippled by debt, as are many other privatizing concerns, including Zil, the huge automaker.

In his haste to privatize, Yeltsin didn't bother creating securities laws or a centralized stock exchange. The voucher market has emerged as a proxy for a real stock market, and the daily voucher price serves as a kind of Russian Dow. A voucher, after all, represents a share in Russia's future. After Yeltsin defeated October's parliamentary uprising, the certificate tripled in value, turning Oleg's friends into ruble millionaires. "We are making money out of air," he says.

When it came time to travel across town to another exchange, I expected Oleg and one of his partners, a shorter, spike-haired fellow named Andrei, to climb into a sleek foreign car, perhaps one of the Lincolns favored by Moscow's moneyed set. To my surprise, they flagged down a passing car and we squeezed into a tiny Lada for the thirty-minute ride. The driver charged only six dollars, perhaps because his car lacked windshield wipers.

Clearly, the "course of the dollar" has not yet led Oleg and Andrei to great riches, or even modest ones. It is simply a way to get by, a better alternative to low-wage Russian jobs. Oleg admits that he would rather work as an engineer, but the going salary is an unlivable 100,000 rubles ($66) per month. Andrei is trained as a teacher, which pays only about 40,000 rubles monthly. At Moscow's kiosks, that will buy two bottles of Smirnoff, direct from Connecticut. Money, of course, means more than vodka; for Oleg, it means freedom from his father's apartment—and from his ideology. "He is still a Communist," Oleg explains. "He does not like what I am doing."

The dollar has neatly supplanted the old doctrines; in place of the highly structured Soviet state, power resides with the equally rigid and even more ruthless mafia—the unshaven, leather-jacketed young men who lurk outside the exchanges, like *Details* models with brass knuckles. Unlike Western organized crime, the Russian gangs influence nearly every transaction, legitimate or otherwise. When Oleg and Andrei score, they know to share the profits with the right people, or risk robbery, spurious arrest or the loss of a fingernail or two. "They know where I live," says Andrei. "It's easier to pay."

In dollars, of course. The dollar rules Moscow in a way Soviet ideology never could. The exchange rate, posted in almost every shop window, is the governing fact of daily life. On January 1 a dollar cost about 1,250 rubles. Three weeks later people were lining up to buy dollars at 1,800 rubles. Outside Arbat shops and the currency-exchange vans guarded by paratroopers with machine guns, Muscovites can be seen jabbing furiously at pocket calculators, then racing off to spend their swiftly eroding rubles on microwave ovens and lingerie.

Oleg and his partners keep ahead of the crowd on the street by playing dollar options and *fyoochers*. On another day, I met Oleg at the MTB currency-futures exchange, located in what was once a pavilion of Khrushchev's Exhibition of Economic Achievements. This is a much more subdued operation than the voucher market. Perhaps forty well-dressed traders mill about the floor, whispering into cellular phones, glancing at the numbers flashing on the scoreboard. Behind the trading desk, a solemn young man announces dollar-futures offerings, provoking a flurry of shouts from the traders. Selecting a buyer, he intones, "*Zdyelka.*" Deal.

Everyone knows which way the ruble is headed. The art is to guess how far it will fall, and how fast. On the board, July dollars are selling for 2,174 rubles, which means further hardship for ordinary Russians, but profits for canny speculators. To buy the July contract is to bet that the ruble will sink even lower—quite likely, given the Central Bank's penchant for printing money. A sudden economic recovery, on the other hand, would bankrupt Oleg and Andrei.

Oh, well: They didn't create Russia's economic morass. Although he profits whenever the ruble declines, Oleg wants to invest in a company that produces things; but only when "things get better." Unlike the reform-happy editors of *Kommersant*, though, the young traders doubt the political system can correct the country's problems. "Russia will never have democracy," Oleg sighs. "Our history is"—he makes a fist—"strong."

BILL GIFFORD is a staff writer for *Washington City Paper*.

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How Mandela lost the mixed-race vote.

UNITED COLOREDS

By Peter Beinart

In 1948 coloreds (people of mixed race) played a crucial role in the election that brought the National Party to power in South Africa. Jan Smuts's ruling United Party lost eleven seats in the largely colored Western Cape, allowing D.F. Malan's Nationalists to construct a majority coalition of five. By 1956 the National Party had stripped coloreds of the right to vote, and laid the foundations of apartheid.

With South Africa's first free elections less than three months away, coloreds once again represent a swing constituency, and the "new" National Party, led by President F.W. de Klerk, is wooing them with surprising success. Recent polls show that among coloreds—descendants of the indigenous Khoisan peoples of the Cape, and of slaves imported in the eighteenth century from Indonesia, Madagascar and Mozambique—the N.P. leads the African National Congress by ten to twenty percentage points. Though coloreds make up only 8 percent of the population, they have the potential to cause trouble for the ANC, particularly in the Western Cape, where they make up 55 percent of the electorate.

Colored resistance contrasts with the progress the ANC has made among white South Africa's business and professional elite. On Cape Town's Clifton Beach, where the pigment-deprived spent what was dubbed "South Africa's last white Christmas," the view, commonly held two or three years ago, that "the ANC couldn't run a bath let alone a country" has faded. Secretary-General and potential vice president Cyril Ramaphosa is admired for keeping negotiations alive when massacres in Boipatong and the Ciskei made them unpopular. *Leadership*, white South Africa's glossy, pro-business quarterly, recently published a gushing cover interview and profile of likely ANC foreign minister Thabo Mbeki. The charismatic Tokyo Sexwale, probable prime minister of the powerful Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging region, is married to an Afrikaans woman, and celebrated as "the heartthrob of Sandton" (Johannesburg's exclusive white suburb).

More threatening ANC leaders have been marginalized. Aging Stalinist Harry Gwala was defeated by moderate Jacob Zuma to be the ANC's candidate for prime minister of Natal/Kwazulu. Youth League President Peter Mokaba, known for his "kill the Boer" rhetoric, will likely end up in the incongruous but innocuous position of minister of tourism. Winnie Mandela was resuscitated politically by her recent election as head of the ANC's Women League, but her husband will probably pass her over for the job of women's affairs minister.

Talk of nationalizing the country's industries seems a thing of the past. The ANC has even hinted that it may retain respected N.P. Finance Minister Derek Keys. Evidence that South Africa is finally coming out of its recession has gone even further to ease white anxiety. In 1993 South Africa recorded its first year of economic growth since 1989; even higher growth rates are predicted for 1994 and 1995.

Though the obsession with crime remains, political violence against whites is identified not with the ANC but with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian African People's Organization (AZAPO). These parties remind whites that there are far less palatable alternatives to the congress. To some extent, bemused fatalism has replaced paranoia. Many laughingly recount PAC leader Sabelo Phama's explanation of the organization's "one settler, one bullet" slogan: "It evolved at a time when we were having problems with our cadres. A lot of them were wasting bullets."

Among coloreds, however, the ANC's conciliatory moves have been less successful, largely because of the tense history between the two groups. During apartheid, the National Party linked colored identity and privilege to the repression of native Africans. The N.P., for example, encouraged coloreds—not blacks—to join the Dutch Reformed Church. Beginning in 1949, immigration controls in the Cape prevented Africans from competing with coloreds for blue-collar jobs and from living in colored neighborhoods. Of course, white privilege also rested on African disfranchisement, but because whites were more often middle-class, economic competition was less direct than between coloreds and black Africans. Today, African economic and cultural progress, as represented by the ANC, is more likely to come at the expense of coloreds than of whites.

The cultural connotations of the ANC's leftism have been particularly harmful to its efforts to recruit coloreds. The congress's secular image and its unwillingness to control and condemn violence committed in its name have left it vulnerable to the same family values, law-and-order attacks that have afflicted parties of the left in Britain and the United States. Under pressure from ANC strategists, Nelson Mandela recently declared himself a practicing Christian. Still, fears persist. Patrick McKenzie, a thirtysomething colored member of Parliament spearheading the N.P.'s campaign in the Cape, points to rumors that an ANC government will register churches, threatening the right to worship freely. Others criticize the ANC's support for abortion.

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The admission by the ANC's longtime standard-bearer among coloreds, the Reverend Allan Boesak, to having an affair with a white reporter has further compromised its reputation. Achmat Davids, a colored ANC candidate for the Western Cape's regional legislature, admits, "This is a very religious community. Many have not forgiven Allan Boesak and question his moral right to be a leader if he cannot uphold God's law." After a prolonged struggle, Boesak was chosen as the ANC's candidate for premier in the Western Cape, but as ANC spokesman Pallo Jordan said recently, "His credibility in the colored community is not terribly high."

The N.P., billing itself as a "Christian Democratic law-and-order, free-market alliance," has seized on these perceived weaknesses. De Klerk, accompanied by his wife, kicked off his campaign in Genadendal (Valley of Grace), a predominantly colored town founded as a Moravian Church mission in the eighteenth century. A recent N.P. advertisement in the progressive newspaper *South* disingenuously predicted that if the ANC gained power, Winnie Mandela, "convicted of kidnapping," would become "minister of law and order" or even of "child welfare." N.P. stump speeches slam her statement that "the matchbox is our weapon," and condemn the role of ANC supporters in the kangaroo court trials and necklacings of black policemen and suspected informers in the Cape squatter settlements of Crossroads and Khayelitsha. A campaign flyer declares, "Don't vote for an intimidator."

The N.P. is betting that such appeals will have particular resonance with coloreds, who live closer to black areas than whites. In particular, the N.P. has attacked the ANC for condoning the seizure by black squatters of houses intended for coloreds in the Cape Town suburb of Mitchell's Plain. The N.P.'s newsletter calls the ANC an "architect of anarchy."

In South Africa discussions of policy are rarely free from questions of racial identity. During apartheid, the people of the Cape were encouraged to believe that because they did not have a black majority, they would not face the same political, social and moral reckoning as the rest of the country. Through a labor system that gave them preference over blacks, coloreds were encouraged to feel superior to and distinct from them. McKenzie argues that the perception of coloreds as the "stepchildren" of whites is a thing of the past. But he admits that he fears black oppression as much as white. For colored leaders in the ANC, the very notion of a colored identity separate from a black or African one is a pernicious relic of apartheid—a relic that a colored-elected N.P. regional government in the Western Cape would institutionalize. In the words of the renowned colored jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, "I have to keep reminding people that Cape Town is in Africa. They've repressed and denied every part of it. There's a massive identity crisis."

PETER BEINART is a former TNR reporter-researcher.

Clinton's plan on the ropes.

SHE'S BAAACK!

By Elizabeth McCaughey

On January 31 the White House press office released a statement questioning the accuracy of my recent article in TNR ("No Exit," February 7, 1993). I welcome this opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the White House about the content of its health bill. As I did in my original article, I will be documenting my description of the bill—and my point-by-point rebuttal of their arguments—with page numbers from the November 20, 1993, version. If White House representatives challenge the accuracy of my description again, I hope they will provide page numbers, too, so that TNR readers can compare the evidence and decide for themselves.

Most of the White House challenge focused on this paragraph from my article:

> If the bill passes, you will have to settle for one of the low-budget health plans selected by the government. The law will prevent you from going outside the system to buy basic health coverage you think is better, even after you pay the mandatory premium (see the bill, page 244). The bill guarantees you a package of medical services, but you can't have them unless they are deemed "necessary" and "appropriate" (pages 90-91). That decision will be made by the government, not by you and your doctor. Escaping the system and paying out-of-pocket to see a specialist for the tests and treatment you think you need will be almost impossible. If you walk into a doctor's office and ask for treatment for an illness, you must show proof that you are enrolled in one of the health plans offered by the government (pages 139, 143). The doctor can be paid only by the plan, not by you (page 236). To keep controls tight, the bill requires the doctor to report your visit to a national data bank containing the medical histories of all Americans (page 236).

The White House responded:

"There is nothing in this Act to prohibit any individual from going to any doctor and paying, with their own funds, for any service." "Under the Act, you can pay 'out-of-pocket[sic]' for anything you want at any time, to any physician or hospital willing to treat you." Price controls on doctors' fees? "That is wrong," according to the White House. "There are no price controls. . . ."

How accurate are these statements from the White House? The text of the bill proves they are untrue.

Can you pay any doctor any price for any service you want? Although it is possible to buy cosmetic surgery, psychotherapy or other uncovered services out-of-pocket, the bill prohibits doctors from accepting payments directly from you for the basic kinds of medical care listed in the Clinton benefit package. Below are the reg-

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ulations barring doctors from taking your money. If you go to a doctor for treatment, the doctor will be paid by your health plan. That is true no matter what kind of health plan you are enrolled in. The doctor is prohibited from accepting payment from you (except fixed co-payments) for any basic medical services listed in the Clinton benefit package. That applies to doctors treating patients in HMOs and doctors outside HMO networks. Doctors outside HMOs must submit charges for your care to your health plan, accept reimbursement based on the government's schedule of price-controlled fees and report your visit according to the requirement of title V of the bill, which establishes the national electronic data bank:

> Sec. 1406(*d*)(2) DIRECT BILLING—A provider may not charge or collect from an enrollee amounts that are payable by the health plan ... and shall submit charges to such plan in accordance with any applicable requirements of part 1 of subtitle B of title V (relating to health information systems).

Are you allowed to pay a surgeon more, in hopes of getting the most expert, experienced care? No:

> Sec. 1406(*d*)(1) PROHIBITION ON BALANCE BILLING—A provider may not charge or collect from an enrollee a fee in excess of the applicable payment amount under the applicable fee schedule [page 236]....
>
> (3) AGREEMENTS WITH PLANS—The agreements ... between a health plan and the health care providers providing the comprehensive benefit package to individuals enrolled with the plan shall prohibit a provider from engaging in balance billing described in paragraph (1) [page 237].

The White House attacks the use of the phrase "price controls on doctors' fees" in my article. "Wrong," says the White House. "There are no price controls in the president's plan. Price controls—calling for government micromanagement of every health care service, doctor's fee, drug technology and product—were considered and specifically rejected."

But the text of the bill proves there are price controls on health plan premiums, new drugs and doctors' fees. Here are the price controls on doctors' fees:

> Sec. 1322(*c*) ESTABLISHMENT OF FEE-FOR-SERVICE SCHEDULE
>
> (1) IN GENERAL—each regional alliance shall establish a fee schedule setting forth the payment rates applicable to services furnished during a year to individuals enrolled in fee-for-service plans (or services furnished under the fee-for-service component of any regional alliance health plan) [page 134]....
>
> (4) ANNUAL REVISION—A regional alliance ... shall annually update the payment rates provided under the fee schedule [page 135].

The White House says "it is not clear why a patient would want to pay a doctor 'directly' for services that their [sic] insurance company is obligated to buy." One reason is privacy. Evading government regulations and paying the doctor directly would allow you to keep your personal medical problems out of the national data bank.

Will your personal medical history be stored in a national data bank? The White House says "not true" and "patently untrue" to my statement that "the bill requires the doctor to report your visit to a national data bank containing the medical histories of all Americans. The administration argues that although "physicians may be required to submit data ... for the purpose of improving quality and assessing treatments and outcomes," the bill "prevents against tying this data to specific individuals."

The text of the bill proves that the administration is mistaken. Information about your physical and mental health and any treatments or tests you have will be entered in a national data network and linked to you through your health security number. Here is what the bill says: the National Health Board will establish an "electronic data network" with regional centers to collect, compile and transmit information. The information expressly includes "clinical encounters," that is, when a physician treats a patient (page 861). A doctor who treats you (except for an uncovered service such as dental work or cosmetic surgery) and does not record your "clinical encounter" on the standardized form and submit it to your health plan will be fined up to "$10,000 for each such violation" (pages 236, 885-886). As the data about you travel from your doctor's office to the health plan, and then to the national electronic data network, this information continues to be tagged with your "unique identifier number."

The bill leaves no doubt that the network contains "individually identifiable health information," which is defined in the bill to include your "past, present or future physical or mental health" and health care provided to you (page 877). To protect your privacy, the bill offers this vagueness:

> All disclosures of individually identifiable health information shall be restricted to the minimum amount necessary to accomplish the purpose for which the information is being disclosed [page 873].

and this:

> [You] have the right to receive a written statement concerning ... the purposes for which individually identifiable information provided to a health care provider, a health plan, a regional alliance, a corporate alliance or the National Health Board may be used or disclosed by, or disclosed to, any individual or entity [page 874].

It would be unfair to suggest that the bill's authors are unconcerned about privacy. The bill mandates that the National Health Board will "promulgate standards respecting the privacy of individually identifiable health information that is in the health information system" within two years and propose privacy legislation within three years (pages 871, 876). But contrary to the White House statement, doctors must report their patients' personal medical information to a national data bank or risk harsh penalties, and the information in the bank remains individually identifiable.

Price controls on premiums will mean too little money to care for the sick. Limiting how much money people can choose to pay for basic health coverage limits how much money is in the pot to take care of them when they are sick. That was the point of the ad on television that the First Lady criticized. A couple are discussing what price controls on premiums will mean, and the woman asks, "But what if there's not enough money?"

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Inclusion and Ideology

The movement in American education that is taking hold the fastest and is likely to have the profoundest—and most destructive—effect is not what you might think. It's the rush towards full inclusion of disabled children in regular classrooms.

Advocates demand that all disabled children be put into regular classrooms, regardless of their ability to function or benefit and regardless of the effect on other children in the class. And they are being successful. Full inclusion is happening quickly, all over the country, without substantial debate in state legislatures and school boards, through court orders and federal directives.

As a result, we are seeing medically fragile children and children with severe behavioral disorders placed in regular classrooms where teachers who have had little if any special training—and get little if any extra help—struggle to deal with the youngsters' special needs. This could mean suctioning mucus from a child's lungs or giving him a medicated enema. Or it could mean trying to figure out how to handle a child who bites and kicks others with no apparent provocation and shouts or cries and exposes himself throughout the school day. And all this while the teacher is attempting to give other students the grounding they need in math and reading and science.

Full inclusion is an ideological position that disabled and nondisabled children must *always* be fully integrated, regardless of circumstances or results.

Full inclusionists argue that all the supports that disabled children have in special education settings must follow them into regular classrooms. This is no more likely to happen for disabled children than it did for mentally ill people who were de-institutionalized years ago. Their supports were also supposed to follow them when institutions were closed, but the supports never materialized and now, as we know, many of these people are out on the streets. That's one reason why many parents of disabled children oppose full inclusion. They fear their children will lose the range of services now available and end up, like those who were de-institutionalized, with nothing.

We usually think of schools as performing three functions: imparting knowledge and skills; preparing students for the working world; and helping them become good citizens and develop socially. But those demanding full inclusion are interested in only one thing—socialization. Teaching disabled and nondisabled kids to get along together is worthwhile (as many schools that don't practice full inclusion would agree), but it is only one value. And it's certainly not the only reason taxpayers support the schools.

Full inclusion is often justified by an analogy with the racial segregation practiced during a good portion of our history. Just as "separate but equal" always meant "inferior," inclusionists feel the same is true of any separate classes for any disabled children.

But the analogy is faulty. African-American children have the same range of abilities and needs as white children. They were excluded only because of the color of their skin, which was irrelevant to their ability to function in a regular classroom and benefit from being there. This is quite different from putting a blind youngster into a special class so he can learn Braille or excluding a youngster who is emotionally disturbed because he will disrupt the education of other kids—while deriving little benefit himself.

Recently, I received a letter from Edward Martin, who was the first director of the U.S. Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and now heads an advocacy group for the disabled. He, too, opposes full inclusion, and he is especially troubled by the idea of making sweeping changes without any data or research to support these changes. Where are our figures on how well disabled students in regular classrooms do in comparison with those in special education settings? How many drop out? How many go on to college or vocational programs? Without this kind of information, we have no way of knowing what is working for these youngsters and what is not. "Special education programs," Martin says, "must be judged on their successes, not on our wishes for a more inclusive society."

Many disabled children can be, and are now, included in regular classrooms and, with adequate supports, many more could be. These decisions should be made on an individual basis—depending on the nature and severity of the disability—and remade if a placement turns out to have been wrong. And they should be based on what is good for all the children involved—the children with disabilities and the others. But full inclusion makes no room for individual judgments. It is an ideological position that disabled and nondisabled children must *always* be fully integrated, regardless of the circumstances or results.

Some full inclusionists talk as though they are in a battle pitting the forces of morality against the forces of immorality. In reality, the battle pits ideologues who, without any evidence, would force destructive changes on our schools against people who believe that children's interests come first.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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The bill's authors anticipate that restricting dollars available for health care will produce shortages: when medical needs outpace the budget and premium money runs low, state governments and insurers must make "automatic, mandatory, nondiscretionary reductions in payments" to doctors, nurses and hospitals to "assure that expenditures will not exceed budget" (pages 113, 137).

In a charge echoed by Michael Weinstein of *The New York Times*, the White House accused me of misleading readers by "implying that such a mechanism exists in the main proposal." The White House stated emphatically that "it does not." The White House and Weinstein argue that only under a single-payer system would payments to doctors and others be cut off if needs outpace the budget and premium money runs low. They expressly charge me with quoting the single-payer regulations and misrepresenting them to be rules for the "main" Clinton health proposal.

The text of the bill proves that the White House and Weinstein are wrong. Cutting or delaying payments to doctors, other health care workers and hospitals to stay in budget is an integral mechanism in the administration's bill, and one of the two passages I quoted (page 137) is from the "main proposal." It provides that if needs exceed budget and premium money runs low:

> Sec. 1322(*c*)(2) PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING DESCRIBED ... the plan shall reduce the amount of payments otherwise made to providers (through a withhold or delay in payments or adjustments) in such a manner and by such amounts as necessary to assure that expenditures will not exceed budget.

The government will decide what is "necessary" and "appropriate" care. The White House attacks as "wrong" and "very misleading" my statement that "the bill guarantees you a package of medical services, but you can't have them unless they are deemed 'necessary' and 'appropriate.' " The administration also says it is "untrue" that that decision will be made by the government, not by you and your doctor.

Let's look at the actual bill:

> Sec. 1141. EXCLUSIONS
> (*a*) MEDICAL NECESSITY—The comprehensive benefit package does not include
> (1) an item or service that is not medically necessary or appropriate; or,
> (2) an item or service that the National Health Board may determine is not medically necessary or appropriate in a regulation promulgated under section 1154 [pages 90-91].
> Sec. 1154. ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS REGARDING MEDICAL NECESSITY
> The National Health Board may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out section 1141(*a*)(2) (relating to the exclusion of certain services that are not medically necessary or appropriate).

The bill uses the word "regulations," not "recommendations," to describe the National Health Board's decisions. The bill also grants the National Health Board power to change the preventive treatments guaranteed in the benefit package and decide at what age and how often you are entitled to tests and screenings, immunizations and check-ups (page 94). Regarding practice guidelines, the bill makes it clear that the National Quality Management Council will develop measures of "appropriateness of health care services" (page 839) and "shall establish standards and procedures for evaluating the clinical appropriateness of protocols used to manage health service utilization" (page 848).

Racial quotas in medical training. The White House calls such a suggestion "ridiculous," but the bill shows it is true. Government will allocate graduate training positions at the nation's teaching hospitals based on race and ethnicity. In determining how many training positions teaching hospitals will have, the National Council on Graduate Medical Training will calculate the percentage of trainees at each teaching hospital "who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups" and which minority trainees are from groups "under-represented in the field of medicine generally and in the various medical specialties" (page 515).

Protecting consumers or HMOs? The White House calls it "deliberately inaccurate" to say that the bill pre-empts important state laws protecting the ability of patients to choose the hospital they think is best and make other choices about their health care. Here is what the bill provides:

> Sec. 1407. PRE-EMPTION OF CERTAIN STATE LAWS RELATING TO HEALTH PLANS
> (*a*) ... no state law shall apply ... if such law has the effect of prohibiting or otherwise restricting plans from—
> (1) ... limiting the number and type of health care providers who participate in the plan;
> (2) requiring enrollees to obtain health services (other than emergency services) from participating providers or from providers authorized by the plan;
> (3) requiring enrollees to obtain a referral for treatment by a specialized physician or health institution....
> (6) requiring the use of single-source suppliers for pharmacy, medical equipment and other health products and services.

Fee-for-service will be almost impossible to buy. The White House labels it wrong to predict that fee-for-service insurance will be extremely hard to buy. They point to the provision that "in general, each regional alliance shall include among its health plan offerings at least one fee-for-service plan." But many doctors, hospital administrators and health insurance experts say confidently that in practice, because of the broader provisions of the bill, fee-for-service will seldom be available. I cited these experts in my article. Here are their reasons:

(1) Regional alliances cannot permit the average premium paid in the region to exceed the ceiling imposed by the National Health Board (pages 1,000-1,005). Fee-for-service insurance, which allows patients to get a second opinion when they have doubts and see a specialist when they feel they need one, generally costs more than prepaid health plans that control patient access to medical care.

(2) Regional alliance officials are empowered to exclude any plan that costs 20 percent more than the average plan (page 132). They will have to apply the 20 percent rule virtually all the time, in order to keep total spending on health plans below the ceiling imposed by the National Health Board. In order to offer

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a plan that costs more than 20 percent above the average plan and still stay under the ceiling, there would have to be other plans offered at well below the average-priced plan. That is unlikely. The bill limits the annual increase in premium prices to the Consumer Price Index, which is significantly below current annual increases in medical spending. Insurers will have a difficult time staying under the premium ceiling, and certainly will not offer plans well below it.

(3) Regional alliance officials are empowered to set the fees for doctors treating patients on a fee-for-service basis, and it is illegal for doctors to take more. In addition, prospective budgeting limits what fee-for-service doctors can earn yearly, even if they see more patients and work longer hours to make up for reduced fees. As Cara Walinsky of the Health Care Advisory Board and Governance Committee, which advises 800 hospitals, explains, the Clinton bill contains "very strong incentives" against doctors practicing on a fee-for-service basis. For all these reasons, Dr. John Ludden, medical director of the Harvard Community Health Plan, predicts that fee-for-service will "vanish quickly."

Does supplemental insurance provide an "exit"? The bill requires you to buy one of the low-budget health plans offered by your regional alliance. You can't go outside the system to buy basic coverage you prefer, even after you pay the mandatory premium. Is supplemental insurance the way out? The White House states "there are no restrictions on the purchase of supplemental insurance." The fact is the bill contains two important restrictions that will effectively close the door to better basic medical care: supplemental insurance cannot duplicate any of the coverage in the comprehensive benefit package, and it must be offered to "every individual who seeks" to buy it, regardless of health history or disability (page 244). Those two restrictions mean that the seriously ill will line up to buy it; insurers will not line up to sell it.

Finally, it is important to note one of the points the White House did not challenge: the Clinton bill is designed to push people into HMOs, which aim to limit patient access to specialized medicine and high-tech care. The premium price controls will pressure HMOs to use even more stringent methods of restricting care, yet the bill omits any safeguards to protect patients from abusive cost-cutting practices such as the withhold.

These facts, straight from the text of the bill, demonstrate the accuracy of my article "No Exit," and the appropriateness of its title. The White House would have you believe that its bill can stop rising health care spending and extend coverage to millions of uninsured Americans, without changing the quality and choice of the medical care you have now. Common sense suggests otherwise. A close reading of the bill proves it is untrue. Several alternatives by other Democrats and Republicans offer promising health insurance reform without limiting what you can buy and how much you can pay for it. It's time to give those bills a close look.

ELIZABETH MCCAUGHEY is John M. Olin Fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

Bentsen, Riley, Peña: victims of Clinton's style.

CABINET LOSERS

By Fred Barnes

Lloyd Bentsen's first year as treasury secretary wasn't exactly the epitome of Cabinet clout. His advice to President Clinton to compromise on an economic stimulus package was rejected. He disagreed with Hillary Rodham Clinton on health care reform, and lost that battle, too. (He's still touchy on the subject. "I don't really want to comment on that," he says.) His plan to consolidate banking regulation, with less than total White House backing, faltered. His influence in domestic policy-making gradually diminished, and he was left to focus on international economics. When the White House wanted help at Treasury, it often looked past Bentsen and tapped Deputy Treasury Secretary Roger Altman, a favorite of both Clintons.

Bentsen was—still is—a victim of an important but largely unremarked feature of the Clinton presidency: the chief executive has largely ended the Cabinet as we know it. Though former presidents had already downgraded the Cabinet as an institution, Clinton has virtually abolished it. The full Cabinet doesn't meet often. When it does, not much happens. Cabinet members without a close personal relationship with the president have little chance of making a difference. Eisenhower convened his nine-member Cabinet weekly. In 1993 Clinton convened his twenty-one-member monster only seven times. And those sessions were mostly social or informational. When the Cabinet met first at Camp David shortly after Clinton's inauguration, professional

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facilitators were used to promote bonding. One later meeting featured a lecture by the new AIDS czar Christine Gebbie on how Cabinet secretaries could raise AIDS awareness.

The meetings designed to be substantive hardly advanced the administration's agenda. Example: on a sunny day last October, the fourteen department heads with Cabinet rank and the seven others with Cabinet "status" wandered across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House to Blair House. They were joined by Clinton and Vice President Al Gore for lunch and two hours of unstructured discussion. Before the gathering, Christine Varney, the Cabinet coordinator at the White House, had privately encouraged everyone to tell President Clinton whatever was on his mind. Few did. The discussion dwelt on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Henry Cisneros, the secretary of housing and urban development, said Ross Perot's anti-NAFTA ads depicting poor Mexicans were "offensive." Everyone agreed. Donna Shalala, the secretary of health and human services, insisted a bipartisan NAFTA victory in Congress would clear the way for passage of Clinton's health care plan. Bentsen noted that "a stable Mexico" is extraordinarily important. Mack McLarty, the White House chief of staff, later called Bentsen's comments "particularly compelling." (McLarty is a Bentsen booster.) Anyway, the meeting was all talk, no deliberation. Nothing was decided. There was no agenda to act on. No policy or political strategies were set.

This Cabinet-free government isn't simply the acceleration of a historical trend. It also fits Clinton's temperament. He simply doesn't like big, formal meetings. True, he loves summits, like the timber summit in Portland last April and the jobs summit in March in Detroit. But those are for public consumption. As a believer in activist government, Clinton is partial to White House meetings that prompt government action. Cabinet meetings don't. Nor do they foster candid exchanges. Bentsen says he even kept quiet at early meetings of the new National Economic Council, a Cabinet offshoot. So many people attended, he says, it was a good bet whatever he said would be leaked to the press. Clinton also knew "the experience of past administrations," says a senior White House official. "Cabinet meetings became show-and-tell." Worse, under President George Bush, they often deteriorated into angry arguments between Cabinet members such as HUD Secretary Jack Kemp and White House aides, as Bush sat by silently. Detailed accounts of the infighting routinely leaked. Clinton's Cabinet meetings haven't been rancorous, but there haven't been many fruitful discussions either. "No matter what I do to get a dialogue going, it doesn't happen," complains Varney.

Clinton prefers to deal with Cabinet members in small groups or individually. At Secretary of State Warren Christopher's suggestion, the president now spends an hour informally with his national security advisers once a week. He loves meetings, just not with the whole Cabinet. Cabinet sessions are "idling time," says Cisneros. Clinton's chief domestic policy body is the National Economic Council. Not surprisingly, NEC boss Robert Rubin, a former Wall Street investment banker, is close to Clinton, having been actively involved in the 1992 campaign.

The collapse of Cabinet government has led to a new breed of Cabinet loser. In every administration, some Cabinet members fall out of favor with the White House because they cause trouble. What's different now is some Cabinet members—often through no fault of their own—count for virtually nothing in Clinton's personally organized administration. Take three prominent ones: treasury, education and transportation. Lloyd Bentsen, Richard Riley and Federico Peña—despite their abilities and records—are barely blips on the Clinton radar screen. In the case of Bentsen and Riley, this is surprising. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee from 1985 to 1993, Bentsen was a Washington colossus. Unfortunately for him, he wasn't a pal of Clinton's. But even that didn't prevent Riley from slipping into obscurity. The education secretary has known Clinton since 1979, when he was elected governor of South Carolina; the two were part of a close fraternity of moderate Southern Democratic governors. Now Riley and Bentsen are victims of Cabinet councils run by White House staffers. In the case of Peña, the freeze-out is a little more old-fashioned: ineptitude has always been a sure road to exile.

From the start, Lloyd Bentsen was leery of the NEC, an innovation proposed by Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign. He feared it would do for economic policy what the National Security Council, created in the late 1940s, did for foreign policy, namely give more policy control to White House aides at the expense of a Cabinet department. Bentsen says he wouldn't have accepted the Treasury post if anyone but Rubin was NEC chief. As a partner at Goldman Sachs, Rubin had handled some financial affairs for Bentsen, and they'd known each other for years. "He's a fellow with no sharp elbows," Bentsen says of Rubin. "Ideologically, we're pretty close." Nonetheless, Bentsen's fear was real-

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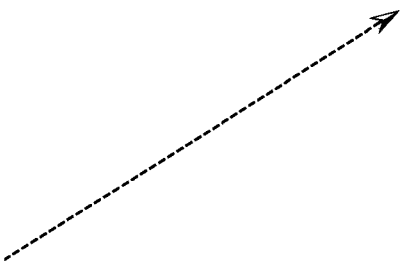

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ized. The NEC has usurped economic policy-making. "Rubin is a strong player," says a senior White House official. "He's making policy."

This had nothing to do with the quality of Bentsen's advice. On the stimulus package, Bentsen was vindicated, not only because it lost and the compromise he recommended might have won, but because the economy is expanding nicely without any stimulus. "It worked out just fine," Bentsen says. But Labor Secretary Robert Reich, a pal of Clinton's since their days together at Oxford, was instrumental in persuading the president to push ahead with the package. On health care, Bentsen had no influence. "At first, I was not getting the numbers," he says. "I called Mrs. Clinton and I got them the next day." The Clinton plan, though, involved far more government intervention than Bentsen advocates, and its popular support has dwindled. "Obviously," says Bentsen, "adjustments are going to have to be made."

DRAWING BY ROBERT GROSSMAN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Bentsen's expendability as treasury secretary, from the White House viewpoint, was shown last December when the president briefly considered him to replace fired Defense Secretary Les Aspin. "There are a hell of a lot more candidates for secretary of treasury than secretary of defense," explains a White House aide. Bentsen was never consulted. About the same time, he was undercut by the president on his bid to consolidate banking regulation in one body instead of four. This is opposed by the Federal Reserve, which would lose regulatory authority. Many bankers agree with the Fed. Over Christmas, while Clinton visited Arkansas, a banker complained to the president about the proposal. That's not my plan, Clinton responded. It's Bentsen's. I'm not for it.

Bentsen probably wouldn't have done anything to block the rise of Roger Altman even if he could have. But he was anxious last June about releasing Altman to run the budget war room. "You've broken my back," he told McLarty, who knew Altman and asked for him. Bentsen requested a day to think about it, then agreed. Altman, who praises Bentsen as the best boss he's ever had, is now summoned to the White House on practically every issue, while Bentsen travels abroad on international economic matters. A reliable indicator of who's got clout is Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, who has maneuvered cleverly in Washington since the late 1960s. Currying favor with Clinton officials in hopes of assuring reappointment in 1996, he has devoted more time to Altman than to Bentsen.

Richard Riley's problem as education secretary is the opposite of Bentsen's. The Cabinet council that deals with education, the Domestic Policy Council, is too weak, not too strong. It's headed by Carol Rasco, and she's no Bob Rubin. The DPC met only twice in 1993 (now it convenes every other week). Rasco is little help to Riley, who can't get Clinton to talk up education, despite his obsession with the subject while governor of Arkansas. Riley's frustration has driven him to plug for White House attention all the harder. He invited the speechwriters, David Dreyer and Bob Boorstin, who drafted Clinton's State of the Union address, to his office for a briefing on education. He ordered his staff to write passages. He also worked a back channel: his chief of staff, Billy Webster, is married to White House counselor David Gergen's top assistant, Jody Greenstone. And he invited Gergen to lunch. "I think we're moving in the right direction" for Riley, a Clinton aide says. In the State of the Union, Clinton devoted several paragraphs to education. Better yet, the Education Department got a 7 percent hike in the 1995 budget, though most of the increase is to be spent in later years.

Only in the cause of averting disaster has Riley really gotten Clinton's attention. Earlier last year Riley had recruited Clinton's help to avert the mangling of the administration's school reform program, Goals 2000, by the House Education and Labor Committee. The program was already watered down to satisfy the education establishment, particularly teachers' unions. It called for a commission to study the need for "opportunity to learn" standards. These would measure school

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resources, chiefly money, not the performances of students and teachers that are the key to reforming public education. The committee held its ground. Riley got Clinton to write a letter to the committee, suggesting he'd veto the bill if it weren't altered. It was.

Transportation Secretary Federico Peña found his own way to become a Cabinet loser. Unlike Bentsen, who has been overwhelmed by the NEC's White House power, or Riley, who has been hampered by the Domestic Policy Council's underwhelming role, Peña is merely clumsy. In Clinton's government system, Cabinet members have leeway, but they have to be smart and careful. White House aides quickly concluded Peña wasn't either. McLarty took him to the woodshed for publicly voicing concern about Clinton's energy tax proposal. In response to the financial crisis facing America's airlines, Peña pushed for creating a commission, hardly a bold tack. Then, when the commission made recommendations, Peña was powerless to get the administration to adopt more than the most marginal ones. This displeased commission chairman Gerald Baliles, the former Virginia governor. The only idea from the commission that went anywhere—privatizing the air traffic control system—was stolen by Gore's National Performance Review. Peña got no credit.

Left to his own devices, Peña was captured by the constituencies of his agency. When word leaked that Gore's review would urge deregulation of the maritime industry and elimination of maritime subsidies, the industry, its unions and its allies in Congress counterattacked. Peña was the first recruit to their cause. He and influential members of Congress, notably Democratic Senator John Breaux of Louisiana, went to Gore and got the recommendation changed: it called only for a study of end-

Brain Drain

Secretary of Education Richard Riley says that the nation's top students are "in a quiet crisis." In the foreword to his department's November report, "National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent," he warns: "Youngsters with gifts and talents that range from mathematical to musical are still not challenged to work to their full potential."

The report, which takes the strongest stand in favor of gifted education in more than twenty years, goes on to outline the dire consequences of this educational breakdown: the number of students scoring well on SATs and other standardized tests has drastically diminished, and all indicators show that even the best American pupils know less than their foreign counterparts. Yet in the midst of this general decline, state legislatures are freezing or slashing funds to programs for gifted students.

Oregon, for example, recently cut its biannual spending on gifted programs from $1.6 million to $200,000. Over the past six years New York state's budget for gifted education has stagnated at about $13.4 million out of a budget of approximately $9.1 billion. And when Michigan's overhauled education system goes into effect next fall, gifted students will receive $5 million instead of a previous $19 million in state resources. On the federal level, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Program, part of the mammoth 1988 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, receives only $10 million a year—compared with the $7 billion that Congress pours into Chapter 1, the federal program for economically and educationally disadvantaged students.

Given Riley's strong words in support of gifted education, one would think he'd be pushing to reverse this trend. Think again. Under his leadership at the Department of Education, Riley could make the situation worse by rechanneling financing for gifted education. The Department of Education's September 1993 report to Congress proposes to divert Javits program funds now tagged for developing gifted curricula to "schoolwide efforts to provide challenging curricula and enriching instruction ... to all students." It also calls for the elimination of Javits's National Research Center on Gifted and Talented Education, an advocate group for gifted education programs.

Education officials justify the changes with comments about raising the floor along with the ceiling and, in Riley's words, "establishing high standards ... world-class standards" that every student can reach. Undersecretary of Education Marshall Smith explains that the department now wants to avoid using money "to identify a few kids and anoint them as gifted and talented."

Riley is trying to have it both ways, attempting to strike a delicate and politically inoffensive balance between the two. But such inclusive rhetoric clashes with the exclusive, and increasingly unpopular, truth about gifted education—that some students learn more and faster than others. People who have generally supported Riley, such as Peter Rosenstein, executive director of the National Association for Gifted Children, are irked by the slipperiness. "When the report came out, Riley made a commitment to increase the budget for gifted and talented. I really believed that," Rosenstein says. Now the Department of Education is "trying to subvert funds."

The reason for Riley's ambivalence isn't difficult to fathom. He's under increasing political pressure from education activists who want to eviscerate gifted programs.

Public schools have been separating students of different levels for more than thirty years; gifted and talented programs became popular in the 1950s. Grouping by ability has proved an effective way for schools to keep pace with and meet the needs of especially bright students. Recently, however, education scholars such as UCLA Professor Jeannie Oakes and Robert Slavin, head of the Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students at Johns Hopkins, have convinced many school administrators and policymakers that such "tracking" is elitist, regressive and even racist. "Conventional, if increasingly obsolete, con-

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ing the subsidy. Meanwhile, Peña became the champion of extending the subsidy for ten years at $1.1 billion per year. The White House finally caved, with Peña just one face in a crowd of special interest lobbying. The new budget called for a $1 billion subsidy.

Peña would do well to watch Cisneros, a Cabinet member who has learned how to survive in the new order. Cisneros's theory is simple: be at the president's disposal, but don't add to his burdens. Cisneros stays in regular contact with the White House, talking to Varney two or three times a day. He consults George Stephanopoulos on communications strategy. For the announcement last month of an anti-crime program for public housing, Stephanopoulos advised him to hold off for several days, then make it in the White House press room. He did. As for HUD issues, Cisneros handles them on his own. As a complement to this strategy, Cisneros tries to find occasions when he can give Clinton a personal assist. On January 19 at 7:40 a.m. he heard the first announcement of the Los Angeles earthquake in the green room of a television studio. He immediately got on the line to the president, told him the news and offered to say on live television that Clinton was aware of the event. Clinton said: "Thanks for the call. Do it." Cisneros went on the air and announced that the president was fully informed.

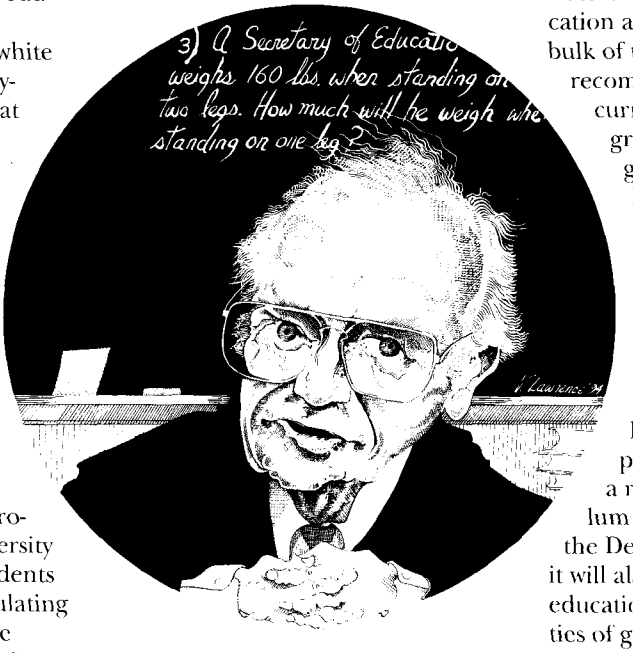
Like Clinton, Cisneros thinks the Cabinet, operating as a body, is obsolete. Still, meetings are scheduled. Cabinet secretaries must set aside the last Friday and Monday of each month in case the president wants them to gather. Normally he doesn't. Last spring, however, the full Cabinet was collected for a dinner at Blair House, all twenty-one eating around one large table. A historic session? Not quite. Gore appeared for dessert. The president didn't show up at all. •

ceptions of intelligence, as well as deep-seated racist and classist attitudes and prejudices, support tracking," Oakes writes in a recent study released by the National Governors' Association.

Citing the disproportionate representation of minorities in lower-level classes, Oakes and others maintain that ability grouping and gifted education in particular represent a deliberate attempt to preserve white privilege at the expense of everyone else. Their studies assert that while the top students flourish with the help of the best resources, groups at the bottom of the scale get the dregs: inept teachers, tedious lesson plans, stale textbooks.

"I do not believe grouping is the issue. It's what we do within groups," counters Joseph Renzulli, director of the National Research Center on Gifted and Talented Education. James Gallagher, Kenan Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina, agrees. "Students can learn if provided with stimulating materials," he says. "But they are given deadly dull materials." Scaling back on gifted programs because too few minorities participate in them "implies the belief that underrepresented groups will never achieve the same degree of excellence, and therefore should be freed of this humiliation," notes Rena Subotnik, a professor of gifted education at Hunter College in New York City.

Squeezed on both sides of the issue, "a lot of policymakers are doing what is politically popular," says Charles Desmond, who founded Boston's Urban Scholars Program and works with gifted children in inner-city schools. "In the long run, it's not in anyone's interest."



Of course, a perfect public school system would give every child Renzulli's optimal combination of "the encouragement, resources and opportunity to reach the highest level of achievement." Unfortunately, our imperfect system provides much less. The reflexive pursuit of egalitarianism, however, leads to mediocrity. As Rosenstein says, "We're educating some students and not others, so let's throw out the program. That doesn't make any sense."

Apparently, Congress agrees. Last week the House Committee on Education and Labor voted to ignore the bulk of the Education Department's recommendations and to side with current law, keeping Javits program funding in gifted programs and preserving the National Research Center. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee is likely to follow the House's lead when it takes up the matter this spring. The resulting bill will probably include some of Riley's language about using gifted programs as a basis "to develop a rich and challenging curriculum for all students." But unlike the Department of Education's bill, it will also explicitly endorse gifted education. "Unless the special abilities of gifted and talented are recognized and developed," the House bill warns, "much of their special potential for contributing to the national interest is likely to be lost." In the end, it seems, it is up to Congress to act where Riley will only speak.

GILLIAN LEE WEISS

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Far and Fairly Wide

The Taviani brothers, Paolo and Vittorio, are notable for their ambition. How they want to be artists! When we sit in front of their films, we almost ache in sympathy. They try so earnestly to fly that we wish we could help. Sometimes they come close, as in *Kaos*, which was made from some Pirandello stories; but usually we keep seeing the film they wanted to make under the film before us.

As with their latest. The Tavianis are Tuscan, and this time they wanted to celebrate Tuscan landscape and lore. **Fiorile** (Fine Line) is a tale that runs through two centuries, involves a great house, peasants, wars, a stolen chest of gold and a curse. Basically the Tavianis wanted to show how the romance that is intrinsic in the landscape evokes, almost necessitates, such legends. (You can't understand Greek gods until you see Delphi.) But the task called for a Visconti, who understood that some Italian stories are operas without the music and who directed as if he heard the music. For the Tavianis, it's all prose.

The first trouble is with their casting. None of the actors who are charged with creating atmosphere is anything more than obedient—to the directors, the script, the prescribed movements. No kind of fire or charm comes from any of them. This is doubly unfortunate since several of them play more than one role in the time-traveling story.

That story begins in the present, with a man taking his wife and children to see an eccentric grandfather. En route in the car we learn—we see—the family history, beginning in the days of the Napoleonic invasion of Tuscany. It involves a French soldier, a local farm girl and a coffer full of gold coins that is stolen from the soldier's care while he is busy with the girl. (He has dubbed her "Fiorile," the new name for the month of May in the French Revolution's calendar.)

The second chief trouble is the reverse of the usual Taviani defect. Usually they overdo; here it's all underdone—tentative, uncolored, unrousing. War, love, revenge, pageantry are all put before us pallidly. The cast, as noted, isn't much help; the camera and the editing help even less. The Tavianis seem to lack confidence in a story that could prosper only if it were told with great enjoyment.

The last time that this sort of material was used successfully was in a brace of French films, *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring*. In the hands of Claude Berri and with a cast that is to the Taviani group as gold is to gilt, those two films accomplished two aims: they rooted their tale of curses and delayed revenge in characters who made them credible; and, conversely, they showed why such stories, if well-done, are gripping, credible or not.

The best thing to be said about *Fiorile* is that it is at least a coherent narrative, which is not always true of Taviani work. (Recall their messy *Good Morning, Babylon*, about Hollywood and Griffith.) But *Fiorile* is like a first draft that now needs to be really *done*.

Vietnam before the war. Not before all wars (what country would that be?), but before you-know-which.

It's Saigon in 1951. Mui, a girl of about 10, arrives from a village to become a maid of all work in a moderately comfortable home. The household consists of a husband and wife and his mother, two young boys and an older female servant. The two boys torment Mui. The grandmother berates her daughter-in-law as being responsible for her son's wanderings. (He disappears for weeks at a time.) The older servant teaches the quiet, gentle Mui how to cook, how to perform her duties.

This is Part One of **The Scent of Green Papaya** (First Look), in which we are introduced to Saigon life of the period just as Mui is introduced to papayas and their kitchen use. Then comes a time lapse of ten years and Part Two. Mui is now a young woman (another actress, of course), working in the home of a wealthy young musician. He is affianced. His fiancée is jealous of Mui before there is a cause. A cause then arises, and the fiancée departs in anger. Mui and the young man are left together, in love.

It's an oddity that the first part, which has little that could be called drama or even narrative, is by far the more interesting. The second part is crammed with drama, all of it trite, and the playing of it seems to accept the triteness, as if it were a chore that had to be survived uncomplainingly. But Part One, which for us outsiders is in good measure travelogue,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Name of the Father. *About the Guildford Four, the Irish people wrongly accused of terrorism in England. Daniel Day-Lewis as the principal "criminal" and Emma Thompson as the barrister who rights the wrong are electrifying in different ways. (Reviewed 1/3/94)* **Philadelphia.** *Tom Hanks convinces and moves us as a young lawyer dying of AIDS. Denzel Washington supports strongly as his lawyer in a discrimination suit. (1/10&17/94)* **Schindler's List.** *Steven Spielberg's re-creation of a German's benevolent act during the Holocaust. Monumental. Overwhelming. (12/13/93 and 1/24/94)* **Belle Epoque.** *A Spanish delight. Mature escapism. In 1931 a youth is a guest in a house with four lovely daughters and a tolerant father. A good time is had by all, including us. (2/21/94)* **—SK**

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relies mainly on its texture, which is lovely.

And this is a further oddity because the whole film was made not in Vietnam, but in a studio outside Paris. The writer-director, Tran Anh Hung, left Vietnam with his parents in 1975 when he was 12. Not only is the physical setting a construct but, to some degree, so is Tran's "recollection" of those days. More knowledgeable viewers may find flaws in the reconstructions, though none has done so thus far. Tran has created an oasis of tranquility, disturbed only by domestic differences—therefore laden with implied irony when we think of what was in store for Saigon.

Tran, who had his film education in Paris, has previously made only two shorts. Most of his cast—all Vietnamese—were amateurs resident in Paris. The one professional is the woman who plays the old servant, who was brought from Vietnam and who instructed the younger people in ritual and etiquette.

If there's anything wrong with Part One, it's beauty. The life that Tran shows us is in tune with the universe; it exemplifies control and grace and an appreciation of the world, of being in the world. This sometimes leads to an overload of glistening leaves in close-up, of tree toads, of flowers and vases. At times the film seems a bit like florid Ozu. Still, through much of it we sense a rhythm, a mode of dealing with dailiness, that is taking.

One aspect that has already drawn some fire is its phallocentricity. The male in a household is the divinity. Mui moves from Part One, from juvenile servility in a male-dominated household, to Part Two, where she is chosen for seduction by another master, is exalted by his attentions and her pregnancy. I can't see how, if this film was to be made at all, historical hierarchies could have been altered. Perhaps, by the very making of the film with accuracy, Tran also made his comment on that hierarchy. •

The civil and uncivil war of Herman Melville.

The Promise of Failure

By Lee Rust Brown

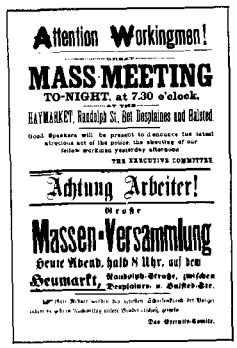
It is suspiciously fitting to Herman Melville's monumental station as a novelist that facts pertaining to him beyond the pages of his books should also seem to have elected him Representative Man among American writers. His genealogy alone offers an index to many of the central episodes in antebellum history. Both his grandfathers participated famously in the Revolutionary War. The fates of his father and his uncles illustrated the extremes of economic possibility played out everywhere during the Jacksonian era. Allan Melville died, a ruined man and insane, when his son was 12; his uncle Thomas Melville disgraced himself in shady dealings in the West.

On the other side, Peter Gansevoort prospered greatly, becoming a leader in the New York Democratic Party and a sturdy, demanding presence in his nephew's life. In the expansionist agitation of the '40s, older brother Gansevoort Melville figured as a rousing orator for Manifest Destiny; and cousin Guert Gansevoort led a controversial career as a naval commander, reaping laurels in the Mexican War. Other family lines connected Melville to New England Whiggery and to the national problems that its high principles failed to contain. His father-in-law and old family friend, Lemuel Shaw, sat for thirty years as chief justice of the Massachusetts supreme court, ruling in landmark cases from early eminent domain decisions to the first test of the Fugitive Slave Law in his state. Against his private beliefs Shaw upheld the notorious law, and by extension the Union, by remanding the slave in question. Numerous Melville relations also upheld the Union in various ways through service during the Civil War.

Correspondence
by Herman Melville
edited by Lynn Horth
(Northwestern University Press, 923 pp., $82.95, $29.95 paper)

The Civil War World of Herman Melville
by Stanton Garner
(University Press of Kansas, 544 pp., $29.95)

Lee Rust Brown teaches literature at the University of Utah. His essays have appeared in *Raritan, Representations* and *Studies in Romanticism.*



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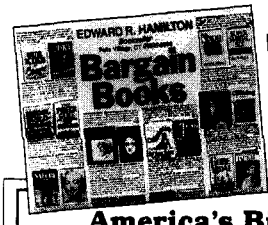

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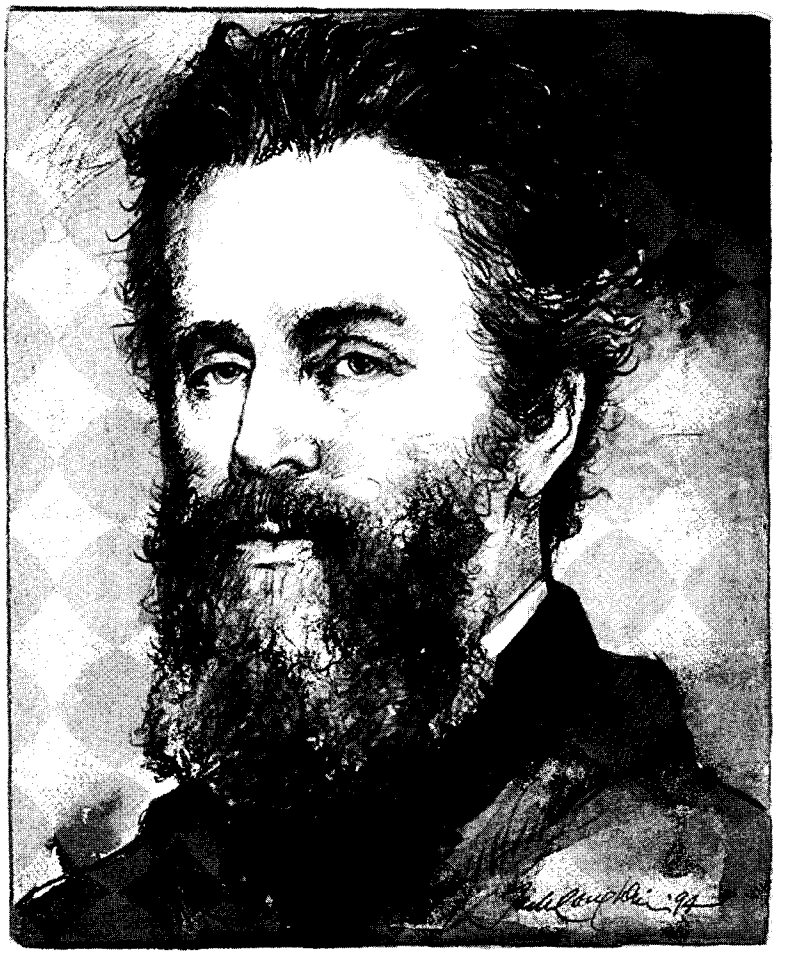
All these lines of national experience bore directly on Melville; and all reappeared in manifold ways in the narrative and symbolic arsenal of his writing. So who can fault scholars for using the implications of his kinship as a key for interpreting his work? Aside from his four overseas voyages, Melville never lived outside the dense system of his family. Whether he was stifled by it or sustained by it, his family made his life, like his books, coextensive with America.

Melville's own career also appears to have spread itself along representative lines. As highborn as any American could claim to be, he was forced by family ruin to start from scratch. He shipped out as a common sailor on a whaling vessel when he was 20. On coming home he transformed the trials of four years at sea into a capital stake for a new enterprise. Two books recounting his Polynesian adventures, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), were instant hits. Melville then found himself in a characteristically American fix: he became the prisoner of his success. As he later lamented, readers and publishers now saw him as "the man who lived among the cannibals." His audience looked to him for more of the same, more exotic yet "realistic" page-turners. Given the depth of his resistance to it, we must wonder what this confining expectation matched in Melville himself, especially since it was joined to pressure for financial success from his family. But Melville was always bound by the need to make money at writing, and for him this was reason enough to identify the authorial specter of "Typee Melville" not only with external economic necessity, but also with the leviathan image of America that he assaulted in later books.

His letters suggest that it was perversely because of the public demand he had created that Melville chose, in the extravagant *Mardi* (1849), to turn against his own arresting facts with outright romance. *Mardi*'s poor reception clarified the conflict that he had engaged by daring to write the book in the first place. Melville needed his books to be commercial hits; yet now it was manifest that the writer, if not all the writing, was at war with the author. The applauded author had the knack and the cachet to make a living at books; the orphaned writer was driven to tell the unmanageable truth by all means and at every cost.

This unhappily productive struggle shaped and deformed Melville's work through the decade of his major fiction. We watch him veer toward authorship in the two "jobs" of 1849, *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*, which he completed with amazing energy given his professed indifference toward them. After *White-Jacket*, whose dense allegory was sufficiently offset by clear facts and a controversial issue (the flogging of sailors) to give him his last popular success, Melville once again swerved toward the pole of defiance: "So far as I am individually concerned, & independent of my pocket, it is my earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail.'—Pardon this egotism." This testimony was made not to a literary confidante, but in a letter to his father-in-law, Judge Shaw, who was already loaning Melville funds for domestic upkeep. The great "failure," of course, was to be *Moby-Dick* (1851). And even there we see the initial framework of a gripping sea tale—the popular author's yarn—surrounded, interrupted, distended by a literary imagination not merely contemptuous of limits, but insatiably feeding on them.

The farther out of bounds Melville let his writing venture, the harder it was to rein it back. After *Moby-Dick* came the magnificent domestic squalor of *Pierre*, which made the most painful public failure of all. "It is conceded that Mr. Melville has written himself out," judged one of *Pierre*'s reviews in 1852. The heading of another—"HERMAN MELVILLE CRAZY"—claimed to be making a factual report. In a sense, both reviews were right: the authorial leviathan was in its mortal flurry. Regardless of the dark economies of the magazine pieces to come, Melville had lost his audience for good. Following one last failure, *The Confidence-Man*, in 1857, he abandoned the profession of authorship and—this is the wonder—started writing poetry.



DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

There is good reason, then, for *Moby-Dick* to begin with jokes about suicide. "This is my substitute," Ishmael says, "for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish, Cato throws himself on his sword; I quietly take to the ship." With Melville, novel-writing joins philosophy as one more art of dying. We may wish that the professional results had been otherwise for him. We picture him working out the last twenty years of his career as Customs Inspector #188, haunting the used book stalls on Canal Street, publishing his poems at his own expense, and we are sure he deserved better. Yet any indignation over his fate evades the practical meaning of his failure. It also disregards the force of that central strand in American literature that offers the rebellious life, with all its costs, as an ideal of a life worth living in its own terms.

Since his discovery by critics in the 1920s, Melville's rebellion has too often been cast into stereotypes. His was the Promethean genius, it seems, straining against the narrow tastes of his age; and the work was "ahead of its time," meaning that it more properly belongs to ours. But just as there was nothing

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anomalous in Melville's failure, there was also nothing anomalous in what we now recognize as his greatness. We miss the mark if we allow his posthumous celebrity to isolate his achievement from his failure, bracketing the latter as an unfortunate accident of history. "Failure is the true test of greatness," he prophesied while working on *Moby-Dick*. Fifteen years later, in *Battle-Pieces*, he compared literary daring to extreme daring in war:

> In Cushing's eager deed was shown
> A spirit that brave poets own—
> That scorn of life which earns life's crown;
> Earns, but not always wins.

Melville's *amor fati* would be hard to place in the current American attitude, which identifies accomplishment with entitlement, earning with winning, and which sees no contradiction in demanding that avowedly rebellious or "subversive" lines of expression should be underwritten, authorized, by public arts grants and college degree programs. For Melville, who liked to compare his books to orphans, the most independent ambitions are precisely the ones that refuse entitlement. So it is his success and his failure—the two are bound in one historical knot—that compel us to respect his view that "it is better to fail in originality, than to succeed in imitation." The linkage further suggests that if we rely on authority to support what aims to be original, originality itself may get reduced to another of imitation's guises. Melville saw no way but to keep authority and rebellious imagination at odds with one another. The consequences were personally disastrous. It is one of his art's darker compensations that, given the literary result, we cannot really wish any of it had happened otherwise.

Modern readers who try to find the author of Melville's books have had to reach back not only across the sixty years of his obscurity but across the more profound gap he himself opened up between his personal life and his finished work. The body of writing we have from him is remarkable for the absence of the half-literary, half-biographical material that complements and sometimes dwarfs a writer's published work. With few exceptions, Melville made sure to leave behind only his finished texts. And this in spite of the fact that he had the sort of brooding, excursive imagination that might have left us notebooks such as Coleridge's, journals such as Emerson's or a correspondence such as Carlyle's. Melville wrote letters reluctantly for the most part, saying little beyond what circumstances required. The brief journals that survive are records of travel. Moreover, almost all the remains of Melville's private discipline of writing—drafts, notes, unfinished or abortive starts and at least two unpublished longer manuscripts—are also missing. Melville methodically destroyed the traces of experience, meditation and experiment that connected his ambition to his published work. And he burned most of the letters he received, including those from literary friends. Even the precious ones from Hawthorne were not spared. Scholars have not decided exactly which descendent of Melville's to blame for the destruction of his letters to his wife, but this, too, is exactly as he would have wished.

Few writers have been so intent on erasing their personal tracks. Yet it would be hard now to find an American author more subject to biographical scrutiny than Melville. Three generations of scholars have religiously devoted themselves to recovering and analyzing every trace of evidence relating to him. The recent discovery of one letter, in which Melville lightheartedly announces the birth of his son, Malcolm, to his brother, Allan, was answered with an entire book pursuing its implications. It may be the largest irony of all that, despite the swollen Melville sections in university libraries, the quality of biographical and textual investigation has

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outstripped the quality of critical interpretation of the books themselves. For better or worse, we have been more successful in resurrecting the author than in finding his orphans.

The chief monument to this success is the Northwestern-Newberry edition of Melville's writings, the most copiously informative scholarly edition of any American author. In its volumes' historical, textual and documentary appendices, which often rival or exceed the length of the text, one finds a compendium of the history of Melville scholarship. Given the amount of biographical information its editors set alongside Melville's writing, all the volumes together will make up the most illuminating critical biography we can expect anytime soon.

The most recent volume, edited by Lynn Horth, is devoted to Melville's correspondence. It adds letters discovered since Merrill Davis's and William Gilman's 1960 edition, the most interesting of which are Melville's droll announcement of Malcolm's birth and two letters to Lemuel Shaw outlining his financial distress in 1856. This cannot change the fact that even among surviving letters the substantial ones are relatively few. The overall effect is of a life concealed rather than communicated. Horth's volume does everything it can to make up for this, annotating in detail the letters by and to Melville, recording unlocated letters and the evidence relating to them and drawing up a calendar of Melville's correspondence that reminds us not only of what is lost but of what, in the century of great letter-writers, was never there in the first place. The volume will be indispensable for further Melville scholarship. For most readers, though, its bulk will make up a kind of giant cenotaph indicating what it can mean when a major writer prefers not to be a man of letters. Perhaps it takes an apparatus of such scale to reflect the strength of Melville's enduring refusal.

Melville's strongest letters are the ones that have long been famous, those to Evert Duyckinck, Richard Henry Dana Jr. and Hawthorne. The best of them are as provocative as the best letters of Keats. All derive from his period of defiant "unfolding" ("three weeks have scarcely passed ... that I have not unfolded within myself") between *Mardi* and *Pierre*, a period that makes a rich bulge in the otherwise meager record of his correspondence. Melville never entirely trusted Duyckinck or his nationalistic Young America circle, but in Dana and especially in Hawthorne he saw a chance for the sort of literary community worthy of his new work.

Moby-Dick would have been something else altogether if not for this brief prospect of community. "I am told," Melville wrote to Hawthorne in 1851, "that there is an aristocracy of the brain." His next letter imagines "men like you and me and some others, forming a chain of God's posts round the world." This vision of community was of nothing so compromising to independence as a literary movement. Instead it proposed a kind of signaling from remote perspectives, but with messages strong enough to cement the correspondents in blood identity. For the brief time when he felt confident of their reception, Melville sent such signals by letter. For the long remainder, when there was nobody to address them to, he sent them out in his books.

Melville wrote few substantial letters after his hope for community died in 1852. That year he broke with Duyckinck, *Pierre* failed and Hawthorne left the Berkshires. He saw Hawthorne for the last time four years later, as he passed through England on his way to touring the Middle East and Italy. Judge Shaw, on the urging of his daughter, had sent him abroad as a cure for his "nervous affections." Melville was then 38, with ten books behind him, yet his future must have seemed as much a blank as it had when he sailed out on the *Acushnet* eighteen years before. "He informed me," Hawthorne wrote in his journal,

> that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to and fro over these deserts.... He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other.

For Hawthorne, there was something "morbid" in all this. Yet his picture of a man consumed in unremitting war, whether between belief and skepticism or between even more elemental fatalities, shows Melville very much alive after the end of his fiction. Melville found power in cross-purposes, his own and history's. If we look ahead to "The Conflict of Convictions," his poem about the portentous atmosphere of 1860-61, we will find a brilliant image of the cross-purposes that thwarted Melville even as they kept him changing: "I know a wind in purpose strong—/ It spins against the way it drives." This self-vexing wind was that of the coming war, but it also signaled the dark new power he found in poetry during the war, a power that would carry him beyond Hawthorne and the world of his own prior ambition. Melville's reinvention of himself as a poet in the 1860s constitutes one of the most remarkable episodes in the history of American literature. Part of what makes it remarkable is that it took the largest possible calamity—civil war in America—for him to bring it about.

Melville's achievement as a poet has not gotten the recognition that it deserves. The same modernist predilections that in the '20s made it suddenly possible to see *Moby-Dick* as a buried masterpiece have also inclined readers to discount Melville's poems. In spite of a few worthy advocates, study of the poems remains a critical dead zone. Partly as a consequence, biographers have tended to view the Civil War years as a relatively featureless time in his life. Melville is seen eddying in the wake of his novel-writing career, listless and depressed, remote from the real force of events.

Some of this perception, too, is due to his thin correspondence and his destruction of secondary literary materials. Unlike Emerson, Lowell and Longfellow, Melville left few of the home front quotes by authors that historians use to leaven their stories of the war. But the real problem with Melville's experience of the war has been that his only substantial response to it is in *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War*, the book of poems composed mostly after the fall of Richmond. The only way to bring Melville's war into focus is through the challenging medium of his poems.

This is what Stanton Garner sets out to accomplish in his new biography. The seventy-two poems in *Battle-Pieces* trace the war's progress through a variety of perspectives, and Garner uses them as paths into Melville's responses to events as they unfolded between 1859 and 1866. Many of the poems drew information from newspaper accounts of the war collected in the *Rebellion Record*, and this has helped foster the image of *Battle-Pieces* as what Edmund Wilson, in an unaccountable lapse, called "versified journalism; a chronicle of the patriotic feelings of an anxious, middle-aged noncombatant as, day by day, he reads the bulletins from the front." Garner shows *Battle-Pieces* to have been no more limited by newspaper sources than *Moby-Dick* was limited by sources on whales and whaling. A capable reading of the poems would be enough to reveal this, but Garner examines the whole range of Melville's experience during the war. *Battle-Pieces*, we learn, reflects a far richer and more surprising background than

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has so far been acknowledged.

Melville spent the Civil War years entirely within the network of his family, yet his family was so large and close, with so many members participating in various aspects of the war, that his vantage on the war was in reality closer to that of a central intelligence office than to that of some remote watchtower. Garner proves it is possible to tell the whole story of the war—both the eastern and western theaters of battle, the contest at sea, the political turmoil in the North, the debates on Reconstruction—by tracing the manifold ways in which Melville was connected to it through the experiences of family members, friends and neighbors.

Melville was not just a receiver of other people's reports, though. He also sought out the conflict for himself. Garner reminds us of what the slight personal record tends to obscure: that aside from Whitman, no major writer of his time had a more direct experience of the war. We see dark reflections in *Battle-Pieces* of Melville's visit to Washington in 1861, when he observed a half-empty Senate debating the national response to secession. When the war was on, Guert Gansevoort showed him blockade ships being outfitted in the Brooklyn yards. He may have seen the *Monitor* there, the warship whose ugly efficiency offered Melville an image for a poetics of the new American iron age:

> War shall yet be, but warriors
> Are now but operatives; War's made
> Less grand than Peace,
> And a singe runs through lace and feather.

In the spring of 1864, after Melville had finally moved back to New York and as he was conceiving the project of his war poems, he made an unforgettable trip to the front with his brother, Allan. In addition to the usual tours of battlefields, they visited their cousin Henry Gansevoort's army camp in the Shenandoah, and Herman rode out with a cavalry detachment on a three-day sortie in which prisoners, and casualties, were taken. On that same trip he saw the Northern and Southern armies facing one another across the Rapidan just prior to the Battle of the Wilderness. The same ground had been contested before, and the even worse fight to come would be the subject of one of *Battle-Pieces*' most harrowing poems:

> In glades they meet skull after skull
> Where pinecones lay—the rusted gun,
> Green shoes full of bones, the mouldering coat,
> And cuddled-up skeleton.

At Culpeper Melville met with Grant, who described to him the assault on Lookout Mountain. Garner suggests that the Melville brothers also may have gone to Hampton Roads, where Guert Gansevoort would have shown them where the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* had fought two years earlier. When we add these personal encounters with the war to those communicated to him by family members, and when we recall how New York lay under heavy military occupation after the draft riots of 1863, it becomes clear that *Battle-Pieces* derives from realities as close to Melville's life as any he had confronted in his seafaring days.

Garner is careful to present details regarding Melville with an eye to the enormous scale of events during these years. His subject, after all, is the Civil War world; and the major achievement of his book is its revelation that this world loses none of its size and its force when seriously considered as belonging to Melville. Certainly Garner shows that the war did more than provide a timely "theme" for Melville's poetry. As Melville wrote in his prose supplement to *Battle-Pieces*, it was "an upheaval affecting the basis of things." The upheaval was Melville's as well as the nation's; and the poems that it called forth made up his own complicated, deeply chastened vision of Reconstruction, which he offered as a prophetic corrective to the disastrous reaction that he saw taking shape during 1865-66.

As Melville felt it, the trauma of this war was of such force as to overmaster conventional literary treatments. "Man goes out into the wilds," his Wilderness poem tells us, "And Orpheus's charm is vain." The war's reality was too strong for allegory, moral explanation or sentimental pictures; its meanings were of the sort more suffered than understood. Thus *Battle-Pieces* is more literally bound into the texture of specific historical events than any of Melville's other books. We cannot read the poems without already holding within us a painful sense of the wound made by the war. *Battle-Pieces* stakes its survival on its convincing prophecy that the wound, if not the clear sense of it, will keep working on Americans for a long time.

Whatever its orphic vanities, poetry responds to the worst wounds more capably than our lives can—more capably, in other words, than what biography tries to account for. Garner's account of *Battle-Pieces* is weakened by the same strategy that gives strength to his more general narrative: he uses the poems for the purposes of biography, for recovering a clear picture of the writer. Garner acknowledges that his project "does not permit the luxury of exegesis." His aim is to tell the story of the war "in terms of Herman's attitudes and experiences" and in terms of those of his relatives and fellow Northerners.

The problem, at least as regards Melville, is that *Battle-Pieces* remains almost the only direct evidence we have of his view of the war. As with the rest of Melville's orphaned books, there is no getting around the poems, and in spite of his disclaimer, Garner spends considerable time reading them. He is good at charting Melville's ironic formats (the poems address "aspects of the war" through dramatic monologues and from a variety of ideological standpoints) and his accounts of historical and biographical references make a fine companion to *Battle-Pieces*. But Garner mainly wants to use the poems as evidence of the author's intentions, attitudes and opinions; and these, as Garner summarizes them, come up short before the rich ambiguities of the poems themselves. Melville's supposed opinions come off as only more thoughtful versions of those of his family members, who were mostly conservative Democrats.

Still, Melville's decade of fiction offers proof enough that his understanding of history was drastically different, and far more complicated, than the views of his family members. *Battle-Pieces* is itself the strongest argument that the same was true of his understanding of the war. Certainly Melville shared the skepticism of conservatives in regard to the impractical and vengeful program of the more radical Republicans, but the roots of his protest extended into dark, difficult regions fathoms below the currents of conventional opinion. As *Battle-Pieces* shows, they extended into the war itself, and into aspects of it that history and biography by themselves cannot account for.

Criticism has not yet found the way from *Battle-Pieces* back to the public meanings of the war. Melville's strategy in the poems makes this passage a hard one, as befits the strenuousness of his subject. Confronted with an event more obviously suited to an epic format—the birth of a nation in blood—he chose to write in the more intimate genre of the short lyric. His models were Herbert and Herrick, not Milton and Virgil. Yet Melville empties his lyrics of any central personal authority, presenting each of them as a splintered, conflicting "aspect" of a reality too large and terrible for literary circumscription. The "pieces" themselves are casualties of battle, and they deny us the consolations of lyric transport just as they deny us the rationalizing synthesis of epic.

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So while Garner is right to insist that *Battle-Pieces* must be taken as a single work, it is hard to agree with him that the book makes "a coherent literary entity in which discrete poems ... form parts of a larger whole." Indeed, the strong refusal of *Battle-Pieces* to coalesce is a measure of its engagement with the war. "Events have not yet rounded themselves into completion," Melville wrote in the supplement, and the power of his subject is such that they never will. The poems labor in a condition new to America, one in which representation, poetic as well as political, has bowed to naked force. There is something irreversible about this, even for poetry. Melville's conflicting lyric format suggests that all efforts at containment will be local and fatally limited in contrast to the new reality with which they seek to come to terms. Following the war, no part can stand for the whole; and as yet there is no credible prospect of a whole that can stand for all its parts.

The great impiety of *Battle-Pieces* lies in its devotion to what remains unredeemable in the war. It is disturbing to think, along with Melville, that America's definitive turn into identity was based on an event whose real meaning is something the dead keep to themselves. For our own sakes, we would prefer Garner's more optimistic summary of *Battle-Pieces*, that it treats the war as "a fortunate fall through which the corrupted nation might be renewed." But even Lincoln, who did more than anyone to push the encouraging view of the war as a "crisis" or an "ordeal" within a continuum, saw that an entirely new reality had come into being; and the darker hints in his speeches were made explicit in the methods of Grant, Sherman and Sheridan.

For Melville, it had always been the case that truth-telling defeated its narrative frameworks. He saw the war with the same cold eye he commended in Hawthorne: "He says NO! in thunder; but the Devil himself cannot make him say yes. For all men who say yes, lie." Hence the providential plot that usually explains the war gets violated, not fulfilled, by what Melville shows us in poems like "The Swamp Angel," "The Apparition" and "The College Colonel." Nor can we rest easy with Melville's picture, in "America," of a postbellum nation reborn with "Law on her brow and empire in her eyes." A long history of imposed solutions at home and abroad is prophesied in this line. Readers can, if they prefer, go to *White-Jacket* and *Moby-Dick* for a view of Melville's distrust of forced integrities and mechanical totalities. But they will find it just as clearly in the image that haunts *Battle-Pieces* from beginning to end—the iron dome built over the new Capitol rotunda during the war:

> Power unanointed may come—
> Dominion (unsought by the free)
> And the Iron Dome,
> Stronger for stress and strain,
> Fling her huge shadow athwart the main;
> But the Founders' dream shall flee.

It was for America's sake that Melville set the dark openness of his poetry in opposition to the closure of the Iron Dome. While the victors quarreled over how to exercise their new dominion, he published his book to keep the wounds, and the agonizing problems they had raised, fresh. He found himself alone in the effort, as always. Fewer than 500 copies of *Battle-Pieces* were sold. The hit poem of 1866 was "Snow-Bound," Whittier's nostalgic masterpiece about the hearth-life in times long lost. Nothing could have been further from ruined cities and mass graves—that was the point. Whittier's first royalty check was for $10,000, twice as much as Melville earned over his entire career. The line is thin between neglect and evasion. The continuing neglect of *Battle-Pieces*, like the more recent neglect of "Snow-Bound," may plausibly be put down to questions of taste. It remains, however, that Melville founded his best writing on aspects of reality that throw up strong reasons for us to evade them. A hard look at *Battle-Pieces* means a harder look at our Civil War—harder and more immediate, at least, than the retrospections that have come to trouble us so little. •

What Misha Knew

BY JONATHAN RABAN

The Hidden Life of Dogs by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas

(Houghton Mifflin, 148 pp., $18.95)

Dogs are marginal types who live on the interesting frontier between man and beast, nature and culture. Given our present doubts about such categories, it is no wonder that we find ourselves earnestly interrogating the fat rug who noisily shunts his Alpo dish across the kitchen tiles, for never has his experience seemed so relevant to our own. He is our first (and threatens to be our last) point of contact with life in the wild. As a long established metonym for servility, irreligion and objectionable social habits, he is an inevitable candidate for victimhood and consequent empowerment. Having spent 20,000 years—his entire history as a separate species—in human company and human service, his character is a chastening measure of our own.

What is surprising is that Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's best-selling exercise in canine ethology should seem so original. People routinely lie in hiding to watch chickadees and grizzly bears, but it's not usual to spy on the dog with binoculars and notebook. It smacks of following the kitchen-boy on his afternoon off, and it might be misinterpreted. What dogs get up to on their own is meant to be beneath human notice. So it is a pleasure to find Thomas aboard her bicycle, in pursuit of a footloose borrowed husky named Misha on his nightly prowls through the streets of Cambridge, Massachusetts and beyond.

That she doesn't know the purpose of these journeys, or how the dog navigates over his enormous urban territory (about 160 square miles of it, by Thomas's calculations), or how he deals with the strangers he meets along the way, is a fact as pertinent as anything she later uncovers. The millions of man-years that have been devoted to loving dogs, training dogs, walking dogs, throwing sticks for dogs, beating dogs and teaching dogs to beg for bonbons have taught us astoundingly little about the creaturely nature of dogs. When Thomas casts herself as the Homer of canine life, the comparison (like many in her book) is a bit strained and goofy, but it does catch the splendid oddity of her project: "One by one, dog secrets were revealed through a series of adventures, some of them dangerous, all of them interesting. Misha was Odysseus, and Cambridge was the wine-dark sea."

In fact, Misha seems less like Odysseus than like a minor character in Henry James. His interests coincide closely with those of many humans who live within

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howling distance of Harvard Square. Opportunities for food and sex confront him on every hand, but Misha is indifferent to them, preferring to save himself for the nightlong, bladder-depleting quest for enhanced social status. Left to himself, his one aim in life appears to be to pee higher than any dog between Brookline and Lexington:

> One day, while watching Misha nearly invert himself to place an extremely high stain on a snowbank near our door, I found myself idly thinking that any dog who could make such a stain by a normal tilt of his leg would have to be a giant. And suddenly it hit me. Perhaps that was the point! Perhaps Misha wanted to give the impression that he who had made the stain was a giant.

Once Misha's obsession with his social image has been established, it doesn't come as any great surprise to the reader to hear that he "marries" a husky bitch belonging to Thomas's daughter, and that the couple go on to have "children." From a dog with his ambitions, what else would one expect?

In her introduction Thomas mounts a generally persuasive attack on the idea that to flag an approach as "anthropomorphic" is automatically to invalidate it. We have to call on our experience of being human in order to interpret the experience of another species, even if we are liable—like the dog who snarls at a human in defense of its bone ("the dog actually assumes that the person wants the slimy, dirt-laden object, and is applying dog values, or cynomorphizing")—to make some serious mistakes. In the particular case of dogs, whose whole experience has taken place within the frame of human society and human language, it would be absurd to deny the value of the anthropomorphic explanation.

So Thomas writes in a style that tries to weld together the terminology of quasi-objective natural description and the terminology of human sentiment and conduct. Misha and Maria are described as husband and wife, and then, a page or two later, as an alpha male and alpha female. Science is used to supply the corrective vinegar in this sweet-and-sour way of writing. A field trip to the wolves of Baffin Island sets the dogs in the Thomas household against an informal control group of animals in the wild. "Scientists," discipline unknown, are alluded to, as if the sight of a few white coats on the distant fringes of the narrative could save it from whimsy.

"Perhaps" is a favorite word, and the story advances by means of a steady deluge of loaded questions. "Do dogs have thoughts and feelings?" "Do dogs have morals?" "Had Bingo come to the defense of the helpless mice and birds?" "Is adoption natural for dogs?" "Was the secrecy intentional?" There is a great deal of fanciful guesswork and wishful thinking, along with almost enough patient and careful observation to make one go along with the idea that the guesses and the wishful thoughts are the outcome of a fairly conducted empirical inquiry.

The characters of the dogs in the troop are strongly drawn, their quarrels and alliances believably reported. Sometimes, though, Thomas goes right off the rails:

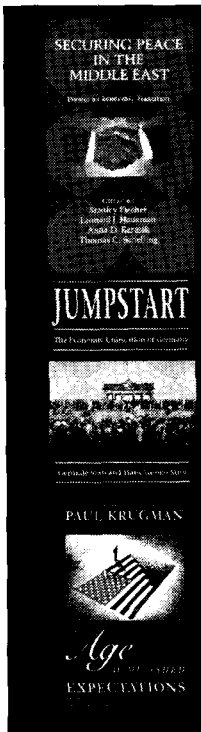
> Maria had given birth on my bed in complete safety. She had had a husband who loved her plus the support and assistance of everyone around her—not only Misha and the human beings but also the two pugs, who had functioned in that context as secondary or assistant dogs...

The trouble with this is not its anthropomorphism; it is the way that its language is so narrowly class- and culture-bound. These dogs, with their loving family, their professional support-groups, their "caregivers" and "babysitters," are not just humanoid, they're on Blue Cross, dress out of J. Crew, swear by the *Moosewood Cookbook* and meet on Thursday nights for white wine and Italian conversation.

The book tends to slip and slide from the cute into the pseudo-scientific and back again. All its best moments take place in a kind of limbo, neither wholly human nor wholly animal, but convincingly doggish. One evening Thomas returns to her house and finds it strangely quiet. The reason for the silence is that one new mother—a Native American dog from Alaska named Koki—has killed all but one of the children of Viva, a low-status dingo. The rest of the dogs are out in the yard, gathered in front of a glass door, where they wait on Thomas's response to the killings:

> ... there we all stood, all of us looking at one another through the glass while I tried to understand what the dogs already knew: that from a dog point of view, the killings had been unavoidable. And so they were. If the dogs saw themselves as a group, and if a group can only raise one litter, there cannot be two litters. Koki was a high-status dog and Viva was a low-status dog. Koki's pups had the right to live and Viva's pups didn't. Koki knew what she had to do, and the other dogs knew it. Even Viva knew it, which explained her detachment from the pups. She could have fought Koki; at other times and in other situations she had even defeated Koki. But that day she had stood quietly aside, as if even she believed that her pups had no right to be born.

So Thomas scrutinizes the dogs through



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the glass door (a happy accident, if that is what it is, for the book has many of the symbolic embellishments of fiction) with the same anxious deliberation with which the dogs are scrutinizing her. The halting, step-by-step reconstruction of logic and motive is nicely done, and even the squarely human notion of "right to live ... right to be born" seems fitting in context. This may not be how dogs think, but it is a decent attempt by an observant and imaginative human being to put herself on the far side of the glass door and report back on the view.

More dogs keep on being added to the household. At one point I counted Bingo, Violet, Fatima, Koki, Maria, Zooey, Suessi, Inookshook and Windigo, which sounds like the roll call of the day-care center from hell. Unsurprisingly, the neighbors complain and city ordinances are invoked. The Thomas entourage hits the road and moves to rural Virginia where, in the unaccustomed space and country air, the dogs suddenly begin to behave like a pack of wolves. They build a den, tunneling into the side of a hill by the house, in secret, like Golditz escapees. "Not even piles of excavated dirt betrayed their project; incredibly, they scattered more than six cubic yards of it, enough to fill a large dump truck, so carefully and so efficiently that no telltale mounds remained."

With the construction of the den ("the dogs' crowning achievement and the focus of their lives"), the dogs seize control of their own world. No wonder they tried to keep the tunnel secret, for what happens now is a social revolution. With a few wriggles and shakes the animals are free of the taint of their millennia of association with humankind. Out on the hill there is (and this will surely surprise the professional ethologists) no anxious bickering over status; no fights; no killings; no Misha-like displays of power-acrobatics. "Each dog had a place, all were content, their routines were perfected and their life was smooth and serene."

It is not long, of course, before the human being in the story goes off to live in dogtopia like Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms. As the end of the book approaches, it is as if Thomas had become the dogs' domestic pet as she fits herself into the easygoing life of the den. "It was like entering a quiet little village in some faraway country," she writes. The phrasing reminds one that little villages in faraway countries tend to seem idyllically quiet only to tourists who don't speak the language and don't know the incest and murder rates. But Thomas has found her Provence—*toujours*!

Stretched out on her belly on the hill alongside her sleepy masters, Thomas becomes a sort of honorary dog:

> In the late afternoon sun we sat in the dust, or lay on our chests resting our elbows, evenly spaced on the hilltop, all looking calmly down among the trees to see what moved there. No birds sang, just insects. Off in the silent, drying woods a tree would now and then drop something—a pod perhaps, or a leaf—and we would listen to it scratching down. While the shadows grew long we lay calmly, feeling the moment, the calmness, the warm light of the red sun—each of us happy enough with the others, unworried, each of us quiet and serene.

The writing here is in a diluted line of descent from Huck and Jim on the raft. At leisure, in touch with nature, sensually alert (if strangely lacking any sense of smell), the dogs turn out to be at one with all the outcasts and the children in American literature whose function has been to put to shame the adult civilization that surrounds them.

By now the disappointed reader may suspect that *The Hidden Life of Dogs* is not really about dogs at all, but is just another inspirational work about getting back to nature and keeping faith with the inner animal. After the geodesic dome comes the snug and leak-proof den. Now that we have failed to work as humans, let's snooze with the wolves.

In 1935 William Empson began *Some Versions of Pastoral* with an arresting chapter on the proletarian novel—and thereby bluntly defined pastoral as a form in which the lives of poor, uneducated people are idealized by well-educated writers in comfortable circumstances, and rural simplicities are praised by jaded urban folk. A lot of writing about dogs is clearly a version of pastoral in this sense. Bingo and Zooey are Corydon and Phyllida going about on all fours. Like shepherds and nymphs, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's dogs are enviably direct in their manners, steadfast in their affections and "serene" in their community life. It is a tough assignment to be the repository of so much virtue, and, like the shepherds and the nymphs, the dogs wilt under the burden of their goodness, diminishing in reality as their morals improve.

JONATHAN RABAN is the author most recently of *Hunting Mister Heartbreak* (Harper Perennial).

When You're in Love

BY LAWRENCE LIPKING

The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories edited by Margaret Reynolds

(Viking, 430 pp., $27.50)

The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture by Terry Castle

(Columbia University Press, 307 pp., $29.95)

When was the lesbian invented? A considerable body of opinion now suggests that she came into being quite recently—if not precisely in December 1910, when human character changed according to Virginia Woolf, then not long before that. Until the late nineteenth century, some people contend, nobody had ever laid eyes on a lesbian. She represents a modern improvement, like the semicolon or the supermarket, things so familiar that we might take them to be the natural ways of organizing our world.

But were lesbians really invented? Three sorts of argument support such an aggressive claim. The first is verbal. Although "lesbian" has been in use from ancient times, as "pertaining to Lesbos," older dictionaries do not define it in terms of the sexual desire of woman for woman. Nor did the association of the island of Lesbos with Sappho, its most famous native, clinch the definition; the ancients seem to have thought that Lesbian women were brazen and lascivious, but not restricted to their own sex. The modern slant on the word dates from the turn of the last century. Only then

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were "homosexual" women equated with "lesbians," at least in the eyes of the literal-minded.

A second sort of argument would push this historical evidence much further. The early sexologists—Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, Freud—who popularized a vocabulary of psychopathology were not merely giving words a new twist but were constructing identities. Hence sexual desire became, for the first time, subject to scientific descriptions and categories. No longer a vast, undifferentiated field of bodily impulses and behaviors that might be attached to a variety of objects, still less a quality of spirit, it took its place on the charts of medical phenomena.

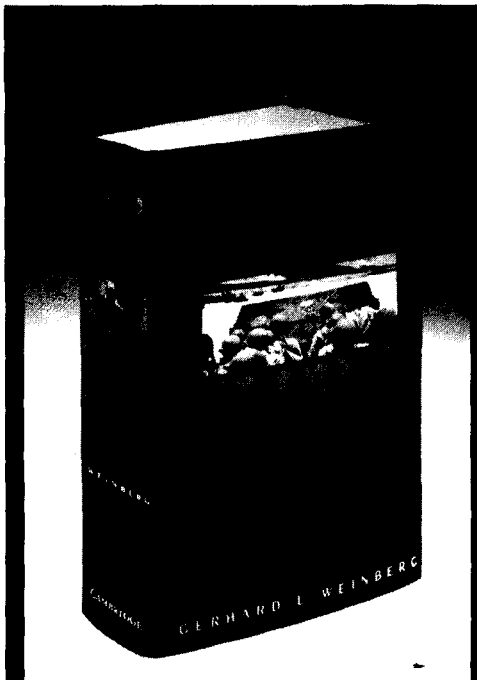
At that moment the tyranny of the normal began. The invention of "heterosexuality" as the standard or healthy path of desire enabled the ideologues of sex to manufacture whole taxonomies of deviance from the norm. It also tempted readers to look for some personally appealing deviation. Gradually people learned to fit themselves into the slots: "gay," "lesbian," "straight" (that puzzling term), or whatever else some doctor or policeman had noticed. We might even regard those categories as the truth about ourselves, about our place in the universal scheme of nature. But people in other ages have placed themselves differently. Like any class, the lesbian is not born but made; and what makes her is the caste system that sorts persons in terms of what they desire.

To analyze the term this way provokes resistance to its power. Nobody likes being pigeonholed and, as Foucault and a growing number of his disciples have maintained, the system of norms serves mainly to allow the deviant to be identified, disciplined and punished. The point of inventing the lesbian was to "cure" her. No wonder that many potential victims refuse the label. The variety and the complexity of their desires, they would insist, make a mockery of the sexual straitjacket in which one size is supposed to fit all. In any case, a word like "lesbian" carries too much baggage: the assumptions of the classically educated, sexually repressed Europeans who packaged it for modern times. A woman who knows herself will not submit to such an alien and alienating gaze. Instead she will love what she pleases and invent herself as she goes.

A third sort of argument, however, would embrace the name of lesbian. In this view, her invention came better late than never; it put her on the map. Before that time, it was all too easy to declare that a woman who desired other women could not exist or, if she did exist, that she was a sport—unique, anomalous, disgusting. The invention of the lesbian changed all that. Henceforth she would belong to a community, a sect, a nation, a secret society, a way of life. A part of the bookshelf, at least, would be reserved for her and her kind. Once named, a lesbian need never again feel alone. Even if some of those who named her intended to stamp her out, she and her sisters could wear the identity like a badge of honor.

Indeed, from this point of view the invention of the lesbian can seem like a progressive stage in human evolution. Out of the shadowy past a new sort of woman steps forward, ready to challenge the worn-out binary division of the sexes around which society has been organized since the manufacture of Eve. The patriarch assumes that he is needed, not only to give women orders but to focus their desires. But the lesbian knows better. And she expects history to be on her side. Already men have lost their lame excuse for being, their claim to be necessary partners in reproduction. Now sperm are a glut on the market.

But more important, masculine ways of running the world have been discredited. As a symbol and as a political force, some theorists argue, the lesbian offers bold alternatives. A brave new experiment in living, she has the potential to



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undo the struts from the scaffold of culture imposed by the patriarchy, to level the hierarchies of domination that govern the relations of human beings with each other as well as with the earth and its creatures, to build new arrangements based on equality and mutual satisfaction. Nor will she pretend that the world as it is lives up to her desires. Only a century old, perhaps the lesbian is just now coming into her own.

Reflections such as these help shape *The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories.* In its design as well as in many of its texts, this anthology traces a movement from old constraints to emerging freedoms. All roads lead to the present; about half the selections come from the last ten years. If we try to view the authors as parts of a single emerging consciousness, moreover, the collective woman seems to have taken enormous strides in understanding herself and speaking out. The opening story, Sarah Orne Jewett's "Martha's Lady" (1897), chronicles an infatuation that lasts a lifetime without ever being expressed, but there is nothing that the final three stories, commissioned for this volume, will not say. Jeanette Winterson, who has the last word in "The Poetics of Sex," mocks the idea that any outsider could keep her from loving or writing whatever she wants. "This is territory you cannot invade."

The sense of progress extends to freedom from literary conventions as well as sexual conventions. Boundaries are fluid in this book. Though some of the selections might be described as classic, the context changes their stripes, too, by signaling us, for example, that Isak Dinesen's "The Blank Page" is lesbian and that chapter five of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is a story. Can a piece of writing be fiction and nonfiction at the same time? Well, this anthology implicitly replies, why not? A woman, after all, might be lesbian or straight with different partners. Definitions ought not to stand in the way of pleasure. Indeed, what qualifies writers for the canon of lesbian short stories, on the evidence here, is largely their willingness to break the canons of gender and genre.

Breaking the rules comes naturally to most of these writers. Parody, playfulness, put-ons, a deliberate jumbling together of the styles of high art and low art, abrupt curves in the narrative line, the refusal of closure and a general lack of respect for standard notions of reality and common sense characterize many stories. In Anna Livia's "5½ Charlotte Mews," a young woman who cycles through the mean streets of London delivering parcels runs into the alternate reality of a fostering lesbian underground. On the new map that she travels, her destination will be a brighter version of Charlotte Mew, the notoriously evasive and unhappy English lesbian poet (the pen name "Anna Livia," from Joyce's all-embracing naiad, suggests that the writer too is reaching for a more generous language and world). The best thing to do with the past, such stories imply, is to tear it up and rewrite it.

Nor are these stories afraid to go over the top. Dorothy Allison's "A Lesbian Appetite" piles on the calories from down home, with a tolerance for pork fat that will scandalize many readers who would take sex in stride. Vampire thrillers, gothic romances, pornography both soft and hard and even a droll cartoon series by Alison Bechdel keep the anthology from falling into any respectable routine. Not all these stories strike me as the best of their kind, or even particularly good; I could do without some of the courtship rituals and most of the dream sequences. But literature is hardly the point. The book aims to open doors for the right sort of reader, clearing some room for almost any taste.

Above all, this anthology likes to play with styles—styles of identity as well as styles of writing. In this respect, even the more old-fashioned stories seem up to date; they do not take the time or place or language or self into which one is born as anything but arbitrary. One might always put on some other style, whether new or old. Even the laws of grammar need not be observed (though the translation of an excerpt from Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* misses her grammatical games with gender). Such mischief with style is supposed to be the mark of postmodernism, but many of these writers knew all the tricks a very long time ago. If the modern age invented the lesbian, one might conclude, the lesbian invented the postmodern. Inserting lesbians into history changes history, too. An account of twentieth-century American literature that featured H. D., Gertrude Stein and Djuna Barnes might have to unseat the male heroes of high modernism. Women and postmodernism were in the saddle from the beginning.

After an immersion in this book, in fact, the reader will see lesbians everywhere. No longer shy, they push to the front of the line. A typical plot of the earlier stories involves a young woman who does not know what to make of her desires, and shows her gradual awakening to who she is. A typical plot of the later stories reveals that everyone else is lesbian, too, including the cheerleaders and the most attractive men, who are probably only cross-dressing. When you're in love, according to an old joke, the whole world is Jewish. This collection casts the world in a different light.

Terry Castle wants to bring that light to bear on the past as well as the present. The lesbian is not a modern invention, she insists, but a perennial human reality, at least as ancient as Sappho. Women want women in every age, and they have always done something about it. To believe that our maiden aunts, like our parents, were unacquainted with sex is nonsense. And so, however much misogynists and homophobes may try to erase the presence of the lesbian and turn her into a ghost, she keeps coming back to haunt them in the flesh. *The Apparitional Lesbian* aims to people history and literature with material witnesses of love between women—tangible women, women one could touch.

This book is obviously a labor of love. Airing the closets of the past, it brings out buried memories and forgotten keepsakes. And a particular attraction of this outing is that, while Castle does not ignore the historical victimization of lesbians, she prefers to stress their accomplishments, their solidity, their survival. She wants us to know, above all, that they have been very talented at living. Her heroines—the writer Sylvia Townsend Warner, the nineteenth-century female rake Anne Lister, Janet Flanner, who covered Paris for *The New Yorker*, and the contemporary mezzo Brigitte Fassbaender—manage to salt their passions with wit, as women of the world. What is the collective noun for a group of lesbians? Wise guys used to have fun with that question. But the answer implied by Castle seems to be nothing less than "world"—a world of lesbians.

Conventionally, however, the other world has been the place assigned to women who love women. Insofar as societies have tolerated them more than gay men, the reason may be protective coloration: an invisible woman can fade into the background, and her invisibility is convenient also for those who, never having noticed her, deny that she exists. Out of sight, out of mind. But phantoms take their revenge on unbelievers. Castle advances a paradoxical thesis of "recognition through negation": that the persistent association between ghosts and lesbians, since the eighteenth century, testifies to an irrepressible anxiety or haunting of the Western psyche. The more such women are dematerialized, Castle argues, the more they insinuate themselves into the secret passages of mind and libido. Marie Antoinette still

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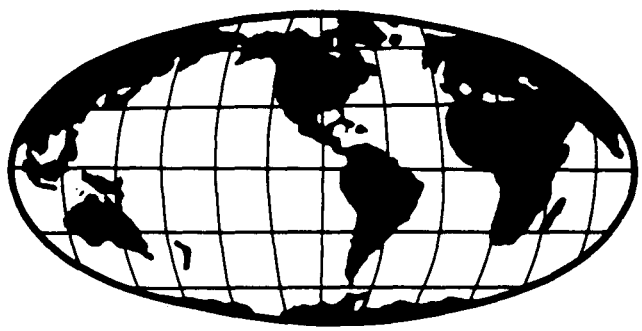
TUNE IN TO THE WORLD



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hangs around Versailles, and girls fall in love with her, they know not why. Ghosts can be sexy. And if you follow them, they will lead you to the heart of your own obsessions.

Obsession certainly lies at the heart of this book. Despite the smart, engaging style, well-laced with irony, Castle is not afraid to ride her thesis hard. Nor is this the sort of criticism that takes pains to be balanced. Much of its flavor comes through in the opening paragraph, as Castle describes her reactions, shortly after Garbo's death, to watching *Queen Christina*:

> I found myself struck by the uncanniness of it all: a lesbian actress, portraying a notoriously lesbian queen, in one of the classic heterosexual scenes in Hollywood film. Wasn't it odd? Yet no one seemed to notice, except perhaps Garbo herself. What else (I fantasized) was the impervious speech about the snow—delivered improvisationally and sotto voce, like a kind of mysterious fugue—but a way of absenting herself, of layering with irony everything that had come before? She was signaling, I figured, showing us that she *knew*. Was it not obvious? Yet to judge by the trusting faces of my fellow audience members—as happily ensconced in illusion, it seemed, as the Spanish ambassador—apparently not.

This anecdote is revealing in many ways. Watching the screen, Castle projects another story on it in which Garbo (who presumably wanted to make a film more true to Queen Christina's life) is held prisoner by her role yet manages to sneak a message to her fans, or at least to those of "us" who also know. What begins as fantasy, however, soon turns into conviction, an obvious truth that only the naive could miss. Those people are caught in the wrong illusion (somehow Castle can tell what they are feeling). It is as if the viewer identifies with the private Garbo she imagines, absent or distant from the audience even while she is immured by it, yet still holding a secret in reserve. Together in the dark, the two women confide to each other that they are not part of the heterosexual crowd. Instead they are special—a star and a critic who notice what nobody else can.

A similar script keeps being repeated in this book. When Castle reminisces about her sexual awakening (in "First Ed," an autobiographical account that is not only like a scene from a movie, but like a picture of someone watching a movie), the young girl fixes her gaze on the tempting Ed as she strips off her hoodish men's clothes and squeezes her body into a woman's swimsuit. Once again a secret code has been exchanged without a touch or a word. And once again the intimacy is made more precious by a contrast with other people who do not understand, grown-ups who patronize Ed's efforts to look like a guy because "she don't have the superior plumbing system."

Much of the criticism in this book is equally personal. "First Ed" could stand for "first edition," turning a person into a book, and Castle gazes at books as if trying to sense the flesh and blood under their covers. Clever and nuanced, Castle's readings mold each text to the pattern that she wants. A striking example is the "lesbian love story" that sets the theme for the book, Defoe's "The Apparition of Mrs. Veal." So far as I can see, there is not a grain of evidence of lesbianism in this early ghost story. And Castle sees that, too: "Is it not a peculiarly late twentieth-century moral and sexual infantilism that wishes to read into every story from the past some hidden scandal or provocation?" Yet with wonderful ingenuity she turns the lack of evidence into the crucial proof. The "very ghostliness" or impossibility of relations between the two women makes this "an archetypally lesbian story," because patriarchal culture denies that such things can be and reduces them all to phantoms. Lesbian equals ghost, the logic seems to run, and therefore ghost equals lesbian. But surely not all ghosts run around in these circles. Castle herself has invented the story she reads.

Indeed, she often seems bewitched by phantoms. A long analysis of *The Bostonians*, for instance, eventually turns into a magnification of Olive Chancellor, whose betrayal both by her protégée and by her creator, Henry James, cannot prevent her from haunting the lesbian literary imagination. Certainly the critic's imagination is haunted—though perhaps less by Olive than by the faces of Vanessa Redgrave, who played her in the film, and "the noble and sublime" Maria Falconetti in Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. Castle loves these images; they seem to tap into her deepest feelings, an almost mystical devotion to a shining erotic idol where the hint of a man is lost in a woman's power.

Here and elsewhere the line between life, fantasy and art often seems blurred. Yet the same crossing of lines helps account for the strength of the book, its unusual sense of urgency and candor. Unlike many current literary critics, Castle seems to think that literature matters, that it is capable of reflecting and sometimes changing the way we live. Hence something is always at stake in her readings. Personally, I have never doubted that women have made love to women through the ages (whether or not one chooses to call such women "lesbians"). Insofar as literature has failed to do them justice, censorship and social stigma provide a perfectly adequate explanation. But such reasoning is not good enough for Castle. Caring as much as she does not only for lesbians but for books, she wants more commerce between them.

A great deal seems to hang, therefore, on such questions as whether, during a gap in the narrative of Sylvia Townsend Warner's novel, *Summer Will Show*, the two heroines consummate their love. When we return to the scene, one of them is licking an oyster shell, which does seem suggestive. Castle is rooting for them; she wants them to change the plot of Western culture. By reducing the man, who is husband to one and former lover of the other, to the insignificance he so richly deserves, the argument runs, their erotic joy would replace the conventional dominance of male-to-male relations in fiction ("the male homosocial triad") with "a new configuration, the triad of *female* homosocial desire." That seems quite a lot for one sexual act to accomplish. Moreover, as *The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories* amply demonstrates, plenty of other women writers have rubbed men out of their plots. But Castle believes in the power of imagination to dismantle the real and rebuild desire on its own terms. The lovers in *Summer Will Show* represent that power, and they must be saved for the struggle.

What is the point of the struggle, though? I do not think that Townsend Warner and Castle see eye to eye; too many decades divide them. After the oyster scene, the more experienced woman tells her lover, "Though you may think you have chosen me, Sophia, or chosen happiness, it is the Revolution you have chosen." The Revolution, in fictional time, occurs in Paris in 1848. But 1936 is the date when the novel was finished, and Townsend Warner had just joined the Communist Party. The apparition that appears at the very end of the book, as Sophia loses herself in reading a manifesto, is certainly no lesbian: "A specter is haunting Europe...." The Revolution invoked by Townsend Warner includes a new power and erotic freedom for women, but in the end the struggle comes down to class, and Marx is its prophet. Castle hardly notices such matters. She dreams about a sexual and textual utopia, and class conflicts do not appeal to her imagination.

Indeed, the literary revolutions sponsored by both *The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories* and *The Apparitional Lesbian* would have been unimaginable until the last twenty years. Each belongs to a

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recent development in the organization of experience, the brave new world of identity politics. Doubtless women who love women have always told stories, but the decision to group them together and to circulate them to a wide reading public never happened before. Nor has anyone before Castle incarnated so many ghosts with sexual preferences. The politics of desire, in these books, takes over the space once left to religion and economics and national pride, the space that defines not only identity but a whole way of life. In this respect, perhaps it was only yesterday that the lesbian was invented.

Or perhaps she has not been invented yet. One current theme of lesbian writing is the loss of a sense of common purpose, often combined with regret for the certainties of a decade ago. *The* lesbian turned out to be an illusion, a patchwork woman divided by race and country and education and class, and held together (if at all) only by the real and vicious enemies who hate all lesbians of every kind. Even defining a lesbian has become a problem again. When the parade is over, each person goes back to her own room.

Meanwhile the dream of utopia stays alive. For all their differences, these books agree that love, and people who catch it through writing, can change the world. New roles, new social arrangements, new languages for loving have yet to be tried. Maybe the lesbian will be invented tomorrow.

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The Spoils of War

BY DAVID A. BELL

The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789–1820s by Isser Woloch

(W. W. Norton, 502 pp., $35)

How does one write the history of revolutions in a postrevolutionary era? The question is a troubling one. In this justly cynical fin de siècle, the idea of revolution stands more thoroughly discredited than at any time in the past 200 years. There has been too much fierce disappointment. Yet in country after country, the memory of violent revolutions remains enshrined in public monuments, official holidays, street names, statues, museums, anthems and schoolbooks. Revolutions have become part of the national identity. Thus history-writers who are disenchanted with the phenomenon in general, but who still recognize their own community's need for common symbols and myths, have a problem.

In most cases, of course, the problem fails to arise. Sometimes, as in the American example, the revolution in question is written off as a happy exception to the rule. Elsewhere, as in Eastern Europe and Russia, the population happily performs surgery on the "official" national identity, with the result that the monuments and the statues disappear, the holidays, the schoolbooks and the anthems change and the street names are rewritten. (As of January 1, the Czarist eagle again adorns Russian public buildings.)

In France, however, the problem *has* arisen. Thanks to the French public's unusual appetite for history, it has even attained a modest political dimension. Studies of the French Revolution now tend to emphasize its illiberalism, instability and violence. In some books, the picture is so unremittingly bleak as to call to mind Burke's judgment on the revolutionaries themselves: "In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows." Still, all but a small fringe of right-wing militants today concede that France's identity is inextricably bound up with that of the Republic, the same Republic that was first founded in massacre on the streets of Paris and was consolidated in Terror and murderous civil war. The historian and publisher Pierre Nora astutely calls France a "twice-founded" nation: once by its kings, once by its revolutionaries.

In 1989, reconciling these two points of view posed a problem for the organizers of the Revolution's bicentennial. The historian Steven Kaplan recently chronicled (and roundly criticized) the tergiversations of some French historians and officials as they struggled to reconcile their own dubious assessments of the Revolution with their desire to stage a useful civic festival and to put France in the international spotlight. The obvious solution would have been the old liberal one of disengaging the "good" Revolution of 1789, with its establishment of popular sovereignty, civil equality and the Rights of Man, from the "bad" Revolution of 1793-94, the Revolution of the guillotine (the founding of the Republic in 1792 stands uneasily on the cusp). Yet the most prominent modern historians of the events had made their careers precisely by emphasizing the continuities between 1789 and 1793, and by seeing in the initial debates of the revolutionary assemblies the seeds of the later excesses. Stepping around these obstacles, all the while fighting a rearguard action against the remnants of the old Republican left (who still embraced the legacy of both 1789 and 1793), required some agility.

One might think that non-French historians, not having to wrestle so directly with the contemporary civic dimensions of French history, could avoid these pitfalls. The ability to remain disengaged is precisely what has made American scholars so prominent in the study of Vichy, another deeply troublesome area of French history. Even today French scholars of World War II must parry accusations that their inquiries into past crimes damage France's national identity. (Nora's prestigious publishing house brought out a screed along these lines just last year.) But the French Revolution presents a special, and thornier, problem. Americans may not celebrate Bastille Day, but references to the general topics of democracy, human rights and popular sovereignty still tend to summon up mental images of the tricolor flag waving and the sans-culottes in the streets. This particular revolution, after all, was a founding event not only of modern France, but of modern politics.

In the case of the French Revolution, then, even American historians cannot so easily withdraw to a comfortable stance of neutrality. Indeed, American scholarship on the subject often displays an unusual degree of fervor. In *Citizens*, Simon Schama indicted the Terror as a step on the road to the mass killings of the twentieth century, and he was bitterly attacked by other American historians for having done so. In a very different vein, some feminist historians have condemned the Revolution for slamming the door shut on women's political activity, and for helping confine women

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in the prison of the domestic "private sphere." In both cases, works on the French Revolution end up posing questions about flaws embedded in the very foundation stones of modern Western civic culture.

Isser Woloch's new book illustrates how such tensions can haunt even the most temperate and the most empirical of works. Woloch is a moderate, open-minded historian, a longtime American specialist on the Revolution who has written about it with sympathy yet takes charges of its "latent illiberalism" seriously. His new book eschews open quarrels with living historians and pronouncements on present-day politics, concentrating instead on the rich veins of administrative documents in the French National Archives. Here one is more likely to come upon the *préfét* of the Seine-Inférieure complaining about venal village councillors than upon present-day French intellectuals decrying the influence of Marxism. And yet this book, too, ends up confronting some of the more troubling of the Revolution's legacies, particularly the development of the administrative machinery by which a modern state can wrench a large section of the population into unwanted military service.

Woloch casts his book as a friendly argument with Tocqueville. In *The Old Regime and Revolution*, Tocqueville advanced his famous thesis that despite the revolutionaries' claim to have effected a decisive break in history, their achievements only completed the work of the past. Tocqueville was referring to the world of institutions, a word that has broader resonance in French than in English, covering the gamut of relations between the state and civil society. (Woloch himself employs the useful term "the civic order.") According to Tocqueville, the French monarchy's trend in this domain had long been toward relentless centralization and increasing intrusion by the state into the lives of individuals. By 1789 the elephantine, powerful, endlessly frustrating French bureaucracy that still thrives today, despite recent efforts at decentralization, had come nearly to maturity. The Revolution, Tocqueville argued, despite its own initial attempts to decentralize, ended up completing the job.

Woloch does not seek so much to refute Tocqueville as to look at the other side of the coin: If these were the continuities, where were the breaks? Where exactly may we find the "new regime"? There have been attempts to answer this question recently, but in keeping with the current dominance of cultural history they have focused on the domains of iconography, civic festivals, printed propaganda or even songs (the withering "Ça ira," after all, could prove almost as useful to revolutionary crowds as a piece of artillery). Woloch, by contrast, remains within the compass of institutions, examining in turn such issues as local administrative boundaries, the organization of elections, the development of the jury system and conscription. Rather than stop the story with Thermidor, or Napoleon's coup d'état, Woloch usefully takes it through the Bourbon Restoration of the 1820s, highlighting the way that Revolutionary innovations sometimes stalled, sometimes were completely reversed, but most often survived in one form or another as militant Jacobins, ambitious generals, spiteful aristocratic émigrés and the occasional honest politician succeeded each other dizzily at the head of the French state.

This is hardly a short book, but Woloch does not leave himself much space to trace the history of several discrete aspects of "the civic order" through at least five separate, and very busy, regimes, and therein lies the book's principal problem. Often *The New Regime* reads too much like a calendar of legislation. On education alone we get the Talleyrand report, the Ginguené report and the Hertaut report; the Bouquier law, the Lakanal law, the Daunou law and the law of 11 floréal, year X; not to mention the decree of 17 plüviose, year VI and the Lepeletier plan. One is left wanting more of Woloch's own reflections, and more glimpses of what such an ambitious attempt to reshape relations between individuals and the state meant on a personal level.

Anyone who has worked in the archives of Revolutionary France has seen the enormous confusion and frustration that accompanied the attempt to sweep centuries of governmental practice onto a giant scrap heap called "feudalism" and start again from scratch. Functionaries of the old regime, still in office but deprived of raison d'être (such as royal censors), besieged Paris with desperate requests for instructions. A legislature would casually issue a sweeping decree and then pass on to something else, without giving any clue as to how its orders should be implemented. Decrees issued with the greatest solemnity could simply vanish into the ether. Woloch revealingly quotes an official of the Interior Ministry of the Restoration: "Out of 500 mayors to whom a prefect writes on any kind of measure at all, 200 execute it, 150 answer that they are executing it without actually doing so and 150 do not respond at all." This, as much as legislators' ambitions, was the essence of "revolutionary government," and we could use more on the theme. Unfortunately, a book grounded in tremendous learning and careful reflection, and clearly aimed at a nonspecialist audience, has ended up reading too much like a work of reference, or an advanced textbook.

This is a pity, because Woloch succeeds in his principal objective, which is to show just how much the successive elements of the new regime *did* accomplish, despite the confusion. In education, despite a crippling lack of resources (one reason for the endless

The Great Gate of Kiev

The tin with a coronal of fruit on its lid
Contained nothing but buttons:
A trove of medals, embossed with rosettes,
Crosslets, crowns. One gold button

With a raised anchor as token
Ensured swift passage through the navy-blue
Nights of the taiga. Laden firs
Hide the boar and coney, a far horde of deer.

And behind the forest, as in chronicles,
A great gate lifts its gilt-and-iron
Eyrie of garlands out of the steaming snow;
Spear-haft palisades impassable

But for the gold credential of embassy,
Or—left behind by a fiery bird—
The single metallic plume
Which, when held aloft, enables

The bearer to scale the air
And skate above the catacomb of streets,
The carters, cabs, the river, then
Tall domes and narrow domes and clearings

Beneath, not unlike those of Kiev.
Finial crosses of the cathedral
Go by. Every spire of the Bourse
Trails a constellation of doves.

FREDERICK TIBBETTS

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number of laws), the principle of free, universal elementary instruction eventually took hold. A similar story unfolded in the realm of public charity, where the concept of entitlements for the needy gained a place on the civic agenda, though relatively few benefits actually flowed down to the intended recipients. In local administration the farming villages, inhabited by the great majority of the population, fell under far stricter governmental tutelage than they had ever known. In law, a Gothic palimpsest of overlapping jurisdictions gave way to a rational and relatively streamlined judiciary. Trial by jury replaced the old system in which judges decided guilt or innocence.

Most of these particulars are well-known to specialists, but by putting them all together, and adding his own impressive measure of primary research, Woloch shows how profoundly the Revolution affected French civil society, not only on the level of ideology, but in its permanent dealings with a public authority that now considered itself responsible for every aspect of the population's well-being. In this way Woloch offers a very different picture of Revolutionary France from the one found in those recent histories that dwell on repression, violence and instability. Not that he has any desire to discount these aspects of the revolutionary legacy. Still, when Jacobins appear in these pages, they mostly do so neither as the leaders of the "infernal columns" that slaughtered their way through the insurrectionary western provinces, nor as the hopelessly ambitious dreamers who spent their time devising a new calendar and a new religion. They come on the scene in the guise of visionaries and state-builders, instituting universal suffrage one day, advancing their bold plans for universal education and welfare the next, all the while laying foundations for the modern French legal system and administration.

These projects may have been elaborated in the shadow of the guillotine, but they were elaborated nonetheless, and as he makes the point Woloch sometimes lets an obvious note of admiration slip into his sober and meticulous balance sheet. It should be noted, however, that he omits one crucial institution in his survey of the "civic order": the police, which Napoleon in particular fashioned into a formidable system of surveillance and repression. An exploration of this subject would probably have cast the regime's newly wide-ranging concerns for the population's well-being in a different, and a less favorable, light.

Finally Woloch finds France's unprecedented experiment in state-building disturbing for another reason. Of all the aspects of the "civic order," the one in which Revolutionary reforms had the greatest impact, he argues, was neither education, nor justice, nor charity, it was conscription. Between 1792 and 1815, France was almost constantly at war; and the wars were fought on a new scale, by armies of an unprecedented size. Slaking the thirst of this war machine required a vast administrative machine, culminating in the establishment of a systematic draft for the first time in 1798. The state also had to develop means to contend against massive draft resistance.

By the first decade of the nineteenth century, Woloch concludes, conscription had become "by far the top priority of the French state." Such a statement would hardly surprise or upset in a history of Prussia, with its long-standing authoritarian traditions (not so much a state with an army as an army with a state, as the old quip had it). Here, however, it is more troubling, for it implies that whatever the initial hopes and plans for a new civic order in France, its builders ultimately succeeded in getting hold of the necessary resources only for that most classic of state endeavors, war.

Thus Woloch ends up confronting the same sort of dilemma faced by the organizers of the bicentennial. Were the Revolution's accomplishments possible without the noxious side effects that accompanied them? Within the boundaries of the "civic order," could the French have had their pioneering education and welfare policies, and perhaps more success in these policies, without warfare and conscription? Woloch seems to lean toward an affirmative answer: without war and conscription, he writes, resources would have been free for other purposes. Perhaps. Still, one wonders if without war, and without the sense of common purpose and common peril that it provided, the will for the other policies could have persisted. This argument was first made not by a historian, but by one of the leading radicals of the Revolution itself, Jacques-Pierre Brissot, who in 1792 called for a declaration of war against the Hapsburgs on the explicit (and repellent) grounds that without it, the Revolution would stagnate and perish. If he was right, then France had only the baleful choice of no war and no reforms, or both, but with the first often eclipsing the second.

The experience of our own century offers many examples of similar choices, and thus goes some way, alas, toward bearing Brissot out. Historians have noted how the expansion of government powers in Britain during World War II helped pave the way for the massive reforms introduced by Atlee's Labour government of 1945, and how certain aspects of postwar French social policies had their origins under Vichy. If democracy and violent revolution have an uncomfortably close relationship, so do war and social reform. From this perspective, the modern civic order itself looks a little more problematic, and the question of how to write the history of its origins as difficult as ever.

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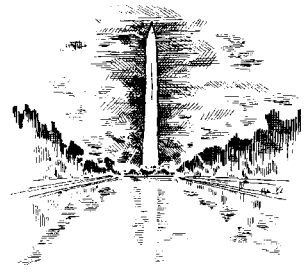
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Tonya's theme

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I DO FEEL sorry for Tonya Harding. I do think she is a victim of her environment, and that her story is a sad comment on modern America. But I disagree with some Harding sympathists about which parts of her environment she's a victim of and what the comment is.

THE PIONEERING PIECE OF SYMPAthy for Harding is a much discussed and powerfully written *New York Times* op-ed piece by Frank Rich. In Rich's view the culprit is a cultural elitism that made the low-life Harding a hopeless candidate for big endorsement contracts. "Her costumes reeked of polyester. Her choice of skating music was not *Swan Lake* but the theme from *Jurassic Park*. She was known for mannish habits: shooting pool, cursing, repairing cars, shooting deer." Long before the Nancy Kerrigan assault, Harding discovered that "though she could win on ice, she never won the expected prize, multimillion-dollar contracts to endorse products." This revelation, says Rich, turned a good girl into a bad girl. "As Tonya Harding, condemned as white-trash lowlife, is tossed unceremoniously into the garbage, it is worth noting that before she surrounded herself with thugs, she played by rules as all-American as *Rocky*. Imagine, if only for a moment, how she must have felt when late in the game she learned that for her they did not apply."

IMAGINATION IS INDEED WHAT IT will take to create this moment, because it never happened in real life. Harding did think skating judges were biased toward Kerrigan, thus making victory difficult, but she never doubted that victory would mean big money. The whole idea behind the plot to cripple Kerrigan was that an Olympic medal would bring the "dollar signs" Harding openly coveted. Rich notes gravely that Kerrigan already has endorsement contracts, while Harding doesn't. Yes, and there's something else Kerrigan has that Harding doesn't: a bronze medal from the 1992 Olympics. Kerrigan beat Harding there, has beaten her in every encounter since, and is the much more likely 1994 medalist. Rich cites a *New York Times* article in which a marketing expert says of Harding, "She's got asthma and smokes in public. That might not turn on anybody except Philip Morris." But the same expert, in the same article, also said, "A tough kid wouldn't be good for Rolex, but she'd be a fit for Timex. You can't have her for Cadillac, but maybe you can have her for Jeep." Of course, Kerrigan's looks make her an unusually lucrative package, and a gold medal for her might well be worth more than one for Harding. But if you think Harding's humble origins would be a problem—that a tough girl's trip from trailer park to Olympic pedestal doesn't equal seven figures—you must be getting America mixed up with some other country. In 1991, when John Daly appeared on the golf scene (a world as genteel as figure skating), he looked and sounded like he had come straight from the set of *Deliverance*. After shocking everyone by winning the PGA title—and, on national T.V., smoking cigarettes between shots—he made more endorsement money in less time than any rookie in the sport's history; he even got a contract with Reebok, the Kerrigan sponsor now cast as elitist.



THE PEOPLE WHO HAND OUT ENdorsement money are not just culturally neutral but, often, morally neutral. Witness whiner John McEnroe, who routinely berated mild-mannered, low-paid officials, or skinhead linebacker Brian Bosworth, who signed with Gillette for Right Guard ads after being suspended for steroid use. The most famous case is behemoth hoopster Charles Barkley, noted for barroom brawls, talking trash on the court, spitting at a heckling fan (he missed and hit a little girl) and embarrassing America by beating up on a scrawny member of the hapless Angolan basketball team during the 1992 Olympic "dream team" walkover, drawing hisses from the fans in Barcelona. ("How did I know he didn't have a spear?" Barkley asked.) Nike has a Barkley commercial whose theme is "I am not a role model." Clearly, Nike CEO Phil Knight realizes that Barkley's badness only elevates him in the eyes of poor black kids who pay $150 for sneakers. Meanwhile, by holding Barkley et al. up for emulation, Knight cuts the chances that these kids will ever be able to really afford such things (at least with legitimate income). Talking trash doesn't go very far in a job interview. And that's not just a throwaway line; a big economic hurdle facing inner-city kids is their cultural aversion to a tool that most of us have shamelessly exploited at some point in our careers: the strategic use of humility and, yes, abject subservience.

NIKE AND OTHER MORALLY NUMB image-makers have one other malign effect: to help create Tonya Hardings. She did what she did because she had learned a lesson of modern America, and the lesson is exactly the opposite of the one Rich thinks she learned. It's that winning is everything and can get you anything. Harding had for some time been proudly calling herself the Charles Barkley of figure skating. Of course, she seems to have gone too far on the badness front; trying to cripple a competitor violates even the loose standards of pop morality (though Nike, playing the populist card against Reebok, has set up a Tonya Harding defense fund). And, for that matter, a few prospective sponsors might have shunned Tonya's image even absent the taint from the Kerrigan scandal. But the reason wouldn't be the things Rich cites—polyester, shooting pool, repairing cars—all of which, to any half-decent ad-copy writer, are value-added; the reason would be that Harding once threatened a motorist with a baseball bat for failing to take a right on red, that police had once handcuffed her after she fired a gun in a parking lot, and so on. Now, there may be, as some have suggested, a kind of sexism here. Wielding a baseball bat menacingly might further endear Barkley to Nike; and, more generally, a bad girl probably attracts less endorsement money than a comparably bad boy. But the question is: Which half of this inequality should we bemoan? Is it really so bad if violent people don't spend lots of time in T.V. commercials inspiring adulation in kids? Or even if smokers don't? Is this culturally elitist, since violence and smoking aren't mainly upper-class pursuits? Or is it obliquely populist, since lower-class kids will, by the same token, benefit most if such moralism succeeds in building character?

OBVIOUSLY, NIKE COMMERCIALS weren't the prime determinant of Harding's character. There was also poverty, her famously unstable home, etc. Rich rightly mentions these things. And I can see why he doesn't mention the things I mention. Talking about role models, and calling some black athletes bad ones, does leave me feeling eerily like an aging neocon. But the easy thing for liberals to do—preach cultural relativism whenever anyone gets morally judgmental—often ends up harming the people we claim to defend. Surely the big problem for America today isn't that it is *too* discerning in the bestowal of celebrity.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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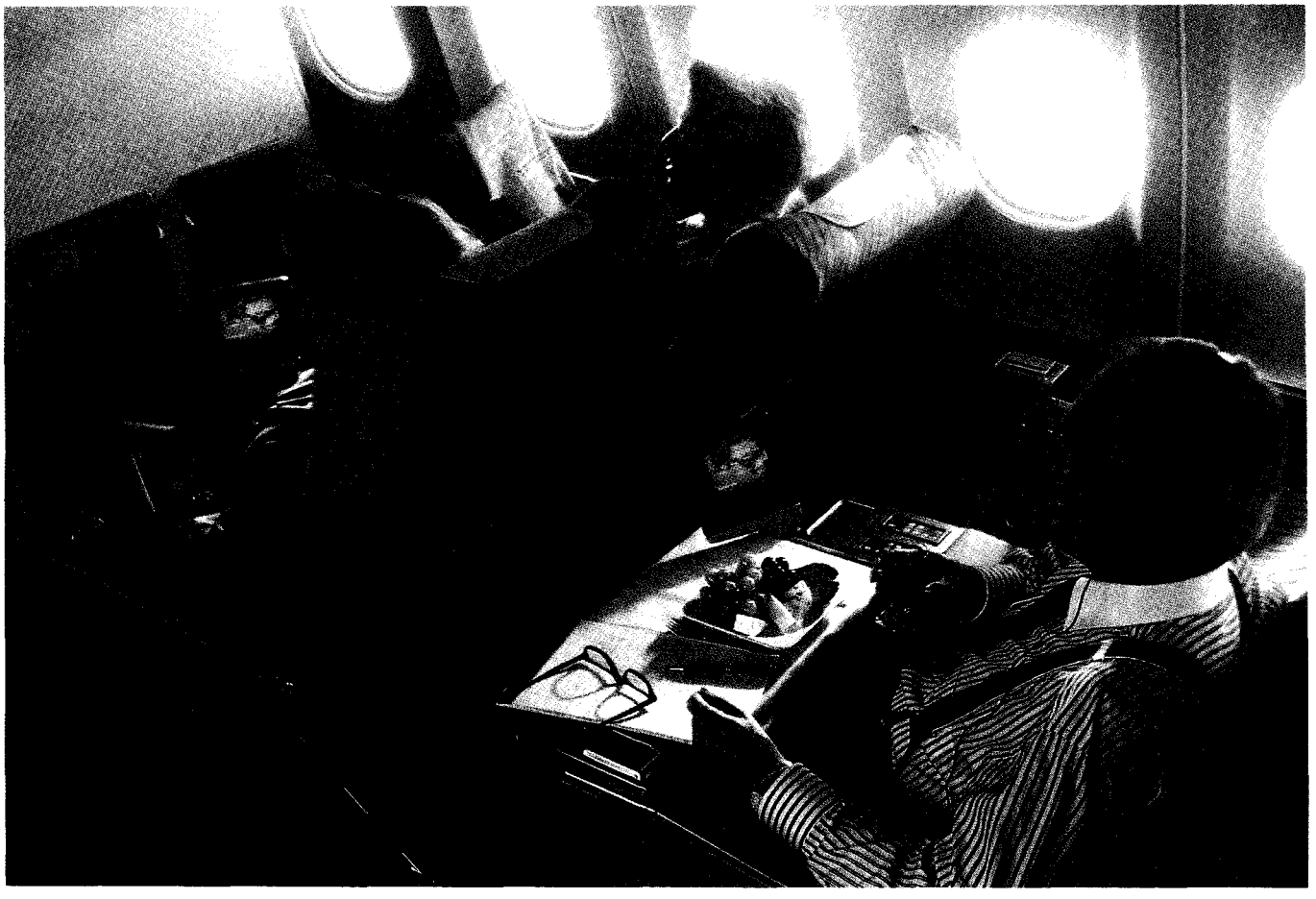

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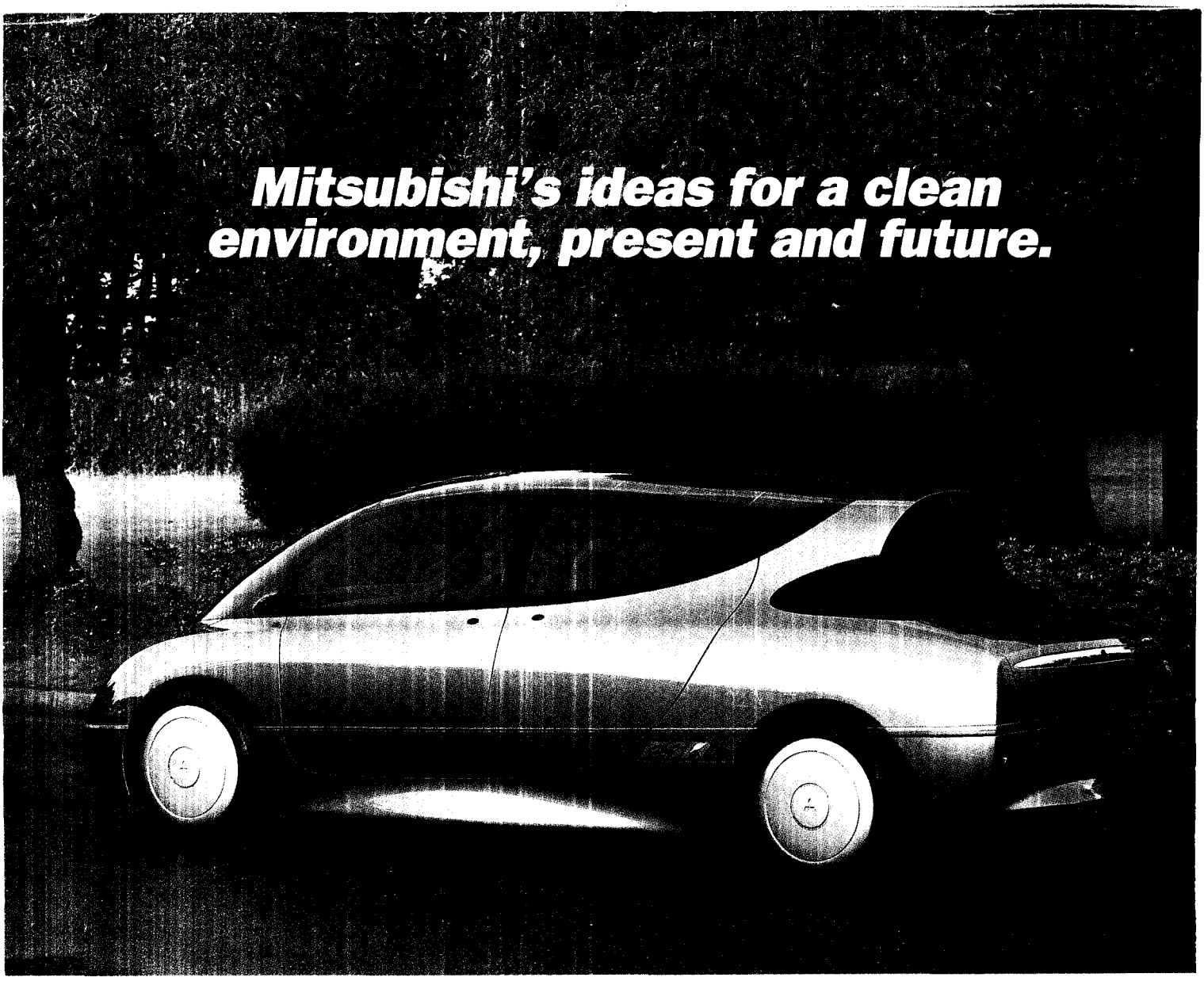

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